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Mayne Reid

CAPTAIN MAYNE REID

His Life and Adventures

BY

ELIZABETH REID, HIS WIDOW

ASSISTED BY

CHARLES. H. COE, OF U.S.A.

Author of "Red Patriots," etc.

LONDON

GREENING & CO., LTD.

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To

CHARLES OLLIVANT

IN TOKEN OF

HIS DEVOTION TO

MAYNE REID

INTRODUCTION

"CAPTAIN MAYNE REID wrote for men and women as well as boys." His name is a "household word" wherever the English tongue is spoken, says a contemporary. Yet few of his readers know anything of their favourite Author's life as a soldier. We now tell them how his "spurs" were won, and other incidents of his eventful life, the record of which should still further enlist the sympathies of his readers.

. . . . . .

If the name of "Mayne Reid" be a "household word" wherever the English tongue is spoken, this will equally apply to the foreign one. It was officially stated that "Mayne Reid is the most popular English

author in Russia"; and you will find the whole of Mayne Reid's works translated into French, Spanish, Italian, German, and for all we know to the contrary into Arabic, and the native tongue of the Red Indian. Perhaps in the coming age of the newly-discovered monkey language we may hear of Mama monkey spelling out to her bambino the "Boy Hunters," while the elder branches indulge in a war-whoop over the "Scalp Hunters."

As my former brief "Memoir of Mayne Reid" was so well received, I am encouraged to present to the admirers of Mayne Reid a fuller and more complete account of his life and adventures. In this task I have been ably assisted by Mr. Chas. H. Coe, of the United States, where some years of the early adventurous life of my husband were spent.

Unlike many biographies, this one presents a faithful pen-picture of the subject as he *appeared in his* every-day life. Nothing has

been suppressed, either from his writings or among his characteristics, that would aid the reader in forming a fair idea as to what manner of man Mayne Reid really was, and in the belief that it will find favour in the sight of his numerous admirers, both old and young, I leave the work in their hands.

ELIZABETH REID.

LONDON, 1900.

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CAPTAIN MAYNE REID

CHAPTER I

Early Life and Surroundings—Studies for the Ministry—His Heart's Desires—Sails for America.

MAYNE REID, the subject of this life-history, was born on the 4th of April, 1818, at Ballyroney, County Down, in the north of Ireland. He was the eldest son of the Rev. Thomas Mayne Reid, a Presbyterian minister of great learning and ability. His mother was a daughter of the Rev. Samuel Rutherford, a descendant of the "hot and hasty Rutherford" mentioned in Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion."

Mayne Reid was of Scotch extraction on both sides. His great-grandfather, the Rev. Thomas Maine, a noted Presbyterian divine of Lanarkshire, Scotland, accepted a call to the ministry of Closkilt, Drumgooland, County Down, Ireland, in 1749. One of this gentleman's daughters married John Reid, also of the Scotch ministry, who was the paternal grandfather of Mayne Reid, our author.

The Rutherfords settled in County Monoghan, Ireland, and some of them were officers in King William's army at the battle of the Boyne, in 1750. For their services they were granted what in Ireland is termed "town-land."

The author's father, the Rev. Thomas Mayne Reid, son of John Reid, succeeded to the ministry of Closkilt, Drumgooland, and with his wife occupied the same old house in which the Rev. Thomas Maine had settled on his arrival from Scotland. In this house Mayne Reid, our author, was born.

The boy was christened Thomas Mayne, but the first name was dropped some years later, and he was known only as Mayne Reid. Several daughters had been born to Mr. and Mrs. Reid before the advent of their first son, and other children followed; but Mayne was the only child destined to figure in the world's history.

The house in which Mayne Reid was born was a long one-storey building of grey stone, common to Ireland at that period. It was picturesquely situated on an eminence facing the Mourne Mountains, at the base of which lies the town of Newcastle, a favourite sea-side resort, and the beautiful Bay of Dundrum, with its wild and rocky coast, abounding in legendary lore.

The approach from the road was by a straight and steeply-ascending avenue. The house was called Mourne View; the homestead included a farm of

The House (now demolished) in which Capt. Mayne Reid was born.
(From a sketch in oil.)

considerable extent, on which Mr. Reid spent the time not devoted to his clerical duties.

Thus young Mayne was born amidst surroundings that helped to foster in him the romance and poetry for which he was afterwards distinguished. And as the lad grew up, a passion for natural history was developed, for ample opportunities for studying Nature in her various aspects existed even around his own home.

As a boy he was manly and self-reliant, as well as a recognised leader among his playmates, whom he excelled in all feats of agility and strength. He was also a fearless rider and a good shot. He was frequently employed in some ingenious contrivance for the trapping of birds and animals, in which young Mayne was often aided by one of his father's old servants—Hugh M'Ivoy; the latter could "stroke a trout," and was held in high estimation by his young master.

A frequent expression of Mayne Reid's was: "I have all the talent of the Reids, and all the devilry of the Rutherfords." He certainly inherited at least the "hot and hasty temper" of his mother's family. The father of Mayne, however, was of a most placid disposition. He was greatly beloved by his parishioners, and respected alike by Protestants and Catholics. It used to be said of him by the peasantry: "Mr. Reid is so polite, he would bow to the ducks!"

Learning seemed to come to young Mayne with

scarcely an effort, and his several tutors found in him an apt pupil. He attended school at Ballyroney for a short time, afterwards becoming a pupil of the Rev. David McKee, who kept a classical school at Katesbridge, near Ballyroney. To this teacher of his youth Mayne Reid afterwards dedicated one of his boys' books—"The Plant Hunters."

It was the earnest desire of both parents that their eldest son should enter the Church. Therefore, at the age of sixteen years, Mayne was sent to the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast, Ireland, to prepare for the ministry of the Presbyterian denomination. After four years' study, however, it was found that his inclinations were altogether opposed to this calling. He carried off prizes in mathematics, classics, and elocution ; he distinguished himself in the college athletic sports — anything but theology.

It is recorded that on one occasion, when young Mayne was called upon to make a prayer, he utterly failed, breaking down at the first few sentences. This effort was called by his fellow-students "Reid's wee prayer."

During the time that young Mayne Reid was studying at the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast, he and his cousin Archie shared a room. It was usual for the Rev. Mr. Reid to look in on them when he visited Belfast.

Early one evening the two young gentlemen were

making preparations for attending an evening party. On the table lay a pair of curling tongs, and young Mayne was unfolding a paper parcel, displaying a pair of elegant patent-leather dancing pumps, when a step was heard on the stairs, which Mayne recognised as his father's, the old gentleman being slightly lame, and always using a stick when walking.

The curling tongs and dancing pumps were quickly hidden from sight under a corner of the carpet. But his reverence, soon after entering the room, unearthed the quarry, and holding up the curling tongs, said: "These belong to you, Mayne?"

The amount of pocket-money allowed was small, and the father regarded such luxuries as a great extravagance. Indeed, he was constantly lecturing his son on the vanity of personal adornment—especially so when the small bills were sent in to him. But in this case the curling tongs belonged to the nephew, and the pumps, a more expensive item, to his son.

Mayne Reid was heard to say: "My mother would rather have had me settle down as a minister, on a stipend of one hundred a year, than know me to be the most famous man in history."

The good mother could never understand her eldest son's ambition, whose daring and restless spirit was so unlike her other children. She, however, was happy in seeing her second son, John, succeed his father as pastor of Closkilt, and her

daughters, with one exception, married to ministers of the kirk.

Having received a good classical education, Mayne tried to settle down at Ballyroney as a tutor, after leaving college, although this effort was made almost wholly on his mother's account. But he soon had enough of this tame occupation, and abandoned it.

Mayne Reid early evinced a war spirit; in fact, he was born to be a soldier. When quite a small boy, he was often found running bareheaded and barefooted along the road after a drum-and-fife band, greatly to his mother's dismay. On one occasion she chided him, saying: "What will the folks think to see Mr. Reid's son going about like this?" To which the boy replied: "I don't care; I'd rather be Mr. Drum than Mr. Reid!"

It not infrequently happens that many of the salient points of a certain ancestor centre in one member of the family. This was clearly exemplified in Mayne Reid, who had inherited from the Rutherfords that strain of adventurous blood which forbade him to settle down in his native home, to the commonplace life enjoyed by his brothers and sisters.

A daring restlessness was upon him to go forth into other lands, and carve out for himself a new life. He longed to travel in America, the famous land of promise; especially did he desire to see for himself the vast prairies and deep forests of the

Western United States, about which he had often read, and to mingle with the Indian and white hunter in their wild life. Like young Norval, he had "heard of battles," and he "longed to follow to the field."

At last his barque was launched on the voyage of adventure, and finally, with the consent of both parents, Mayne Reid left Ireland in 1839, his father taking passage for him on board the sailing ship *Dumfriesshire*, bound for New Orleans. On his voyage out, young Reid amused himself by learning a little sailoring. He afterwards utilised this knowledge in some of his sea books of adventures for boys.

To give expression to his feelings, we here quote Mayne Reid's own words :—

"Like other striplings escaped from college, I was no longer happy at home. The yearning for travel was upon me, and without a sigh I beheld the hills of my native land sink behind the black waves, not much caring whether I should ever see them again."

CHAPTER II

Adrift in New Orleans—Opinion of a Classical Education —Several Years of Eventful Life — *Nashville American's* Description—Joins a Company of Actors.

MAYNE REID'S interest in the new country wherein he had set foot was all-absorbing from the first, and for several days after his arrival he occupied the time in closely observing the strange scenes and peoples of America's most cosmopolitan city. When he finally turned his attention to securing employment, he was surprised to find that his classical education offered him little or no assistance. He afterwards expressed himself on this point as follows:—

"And one of my earliest surprises—one that met me on the very threshold of my Transatlantic existence—was the discovery of my own utter uselessness. I could point to my desk and say, 'There lie the proofs of my erudition; the highest prizes of my college class.' But of what use are they? The dry theories I had been taught had no application to the purposes of real life. My logic was the prattle of the parrot; my classic lore lay upon

my mind like lumber. And I was altogether about as well prepared to struggle with life—to benefit either my fellow-men or myself—as if I had graduated in Chinese muemonics. And oh! ye pale professors, who drilled me in syntax and scansion, ye would deem me ungrateful indeed were I to give utterance to the contempt and indignation which I then felt for ye; then, when I looked back upon ten years of wasted existence spent under your tutelage; then, when, after believing myself an educated man, the illusion vanished, and I awoke to the knowledge that I knew nothing."

Young Reid was now thrown entirely upon his own resources; for although he had carried out letters of introduction to several houses in New Orleans, with his characteristic independence these documents had been flung overboard on discovering that one of his fellow-passengers possessed letters to the same firms.

It was not long, however, before he secured a situation with a large commission house, where he remained for a time. Among other duties, Reid had charge of gangs of slaves, which were constantly received by the house for auction sale. Mayne Reid soon saw enough of this business to render it particularly distasteful to him, and he was not sorry to terminate the engagement.

Finally leaving New Orleans, Mayne Reid went to Natchez, Miss., where he acted as clerk in a store.

His suave and pleasing manners in his new situation attracted many customers, and he was soon promoted and given a good salary.

At this period Natchez was the resort of river gamblers, thieves, and desperate characters; it was also the rendezvous of trappers and Indian traders, being the nearest town of any considerable size to the junction of the Red River with the Mississippi.

Space will not permit us to follow Mayne Reid in his every-day life on the Lower Mississippi. Many interesting experiences and observations may be gleaned by the curious reader from his "Quadroon," a romance which, he informs us, "is founded upon an actual experience."

During his residence in Louisiana and Mississippi, Mayne Reid became acquainted with many hunters and Indian traders; especially did his position as storekeeper at Natchez bring him in contact with these hardy pioneers. From their lips his willing ear absorbed many a tale of adventure and hair-breadth escape, thereby increasing his own desire for a taste of wild life, aud finally inducing him to satisfy his cravings.

The Red River of the South, that extensive waterway, rising on the eastern border of New Mexico, flowing through a portion of Texas and Arkansas, and thence nearly equally dividing the State of Louisiana—this was the highway Mayne Reid chose

for two extensive trading expeditions among the Indians.

The river flowed through a populous Indian territory, and along its borders, and in the back country this bold adventurer spent months among the red men; trading his wares for their furs and skins, learning somewhat of their language and knowledge of woodcraft, sometimes lodging under their shelters, and eating by their camp-fires. With them, and the white hunters for his teachers, he hunted the buffalo and grizzly bear; trapped the beaver and otter, and lassoed the wild horse or mustang. Wherever he went, his frank and genial nature and his daring spirit won for him many friends.

He was an ardent lover of Nature, and took great pleasure in closely observing and studying everything that he came in contact with in his prairie life, whether mammal, bird, tree or plant. "In the same excursion," he tells us in one of his books, "I was hunter and naturalist."

He afterwards ascended the Missouri and the Platte rivers, trading as before. At that period a day's journey westward from the Mississippi carried the traveller clear of civilised life, and within a hundred miles the prairies were often black with moving masses of buffalo. Returning from these trips, he organised several hunting expeditions after the great game. On one of these, starting from St. Louis, he was accompanied, among others, by Audubon, the famous

naturalist, who took an especial interest in giving Mayne Reid the benefit of his experience.

This period of his life is embodied in the "Scalp Hunters," the "Desert Home," and the "Hunter's Feast."

Spending several years in the wilderness, it is little wonder that a man of Mayne Reid's education and powers of observation should become an ardent and able field-naturalist; or that, with his fondness for boys, he should afterwards take delight in recording his observations for the entertainment and improvement of what he often called his "boy public." Referring to his wild life, he says, in the preface to his "Hunter's Feast":—

"I have spent some years in the Far West. I have ridden wildly with the hunter, and strolled quietly with the naturalist. I excel not in the chase, I excel not in the knowledge of natural history—but both I love. . . . I love to paint those scenes with words; for while so occupied I feel as if they were again passing before me."

. . . . . .

In strange contrast was the life of Mayne Reid at Nashville, Tenn., whither he went from the prairies of the West. Here his classical education was of some use, for he was engaged as tutor in a private family—that of Judge Peyton Robertson. He soon became a favourite with both pupils and employer. One of the former corresponded with him till shortly

before his (Mayne Reid's) death. Later, Mayne Reid established a school of his own at Nashville, and erected a building for that purpose at his own expense.

The *Nashville American* thus described Mayne Reid as he then appeared :—

"Not over twenty-five, well built, about five feet ten inches in height; with a face of classic mould, not full, but with prominent points, that made a good impression on all who knew him. In conversation he was bright, and in manner winsome. He was fond of poetry, and would repeat from favourite authors by the hour to a coterie of companions, lolling about the banks of Richland Creek, or sitting at night with a friendly set.

"During the time he taught school he enjoyed great popularity. He was much given to horseback riding, possessing a superb animal which he rode with great daring. As an instance which showed the recklessness of his nature, it is told that he could with difficulty be restrained from having himself lowered into an unexplored cave out on Harpeth River, twelve miles from town, and was only deterred by his companions refusing to have anything to do with the project. He grew to be very fond of his surroundings and the people here. The attachment was reciprocated, the fondest recollections existing of him to this day."

The following interesting observations relating to

large timber give us another glimpse of Mayne Reid at this period:—

"Some of the standing trees have large crevices in their trunks, particularly those of the sycamore or buttonwood species. I will here state two facts illustrating this peculiarity: In riding through a thick forest in the Tennessee 'bottom,' I chanced upon a squatter, who with his whole family—a wife and two or three children—was living and actually burning a fire within the trunk of a standing sycamore! On inquiry, I learned that the man—a tall, bearded, and singular-looking man he was—had passed the winter in this odd habitation. It would not confirm my statement to give the man's name, though I remember it well, for I made his acquaintance and hunted deer with him afterwards. His name was Satterfield. He was a squatting hunter, and lived entirely on the produce of his long brown rifle.

"The other fact is this: In the winter of 1840, myself and two friends, travelling in the Mississippi 'bottom,' spent the night with our three horses in the cavity of a buttonwood tree. Our horses were full-sized animals, and we had ample room for all! It was a cold, heavy rain, that lasted through the whole night; and we preferred this shelter to sitting around a log fire, and getting soaked to the skin."

Many incidents of Mayne Reid's experience in Tennessee may be found in his romance, the "Wild Huntress"; also one sketch in the "Hunter's Feast."

Mayne Reid soon grew tired of the still life in a school-house, and it was not long before he went in quest of some new adventure.

Later, drifting to Cincinnati, Ohio, he joined a company of travelling actors, by way of change, but very soon convinced himself that play-acting was not his forte. He was anxious to keep this little episode of his life from the knowledge of his family in Ireland. They, strict Presbyterians as they were, looked upon actors as almost lost to the Evil One. But the fact leaked out some years later. Of all his varied adventures, Mayne Reid would never tell us of his failure in this one line of business, though he would dwell on his talent as store-keeper and schoolmaster.

CHAPTER III

Early Literary Productions—Defence of Edgar Allan Poe.

LEAVING the strolling players, the hunter, naturalist, and schoolmaster turned from the Far West to the cities of the Atlantic. The spirit of adventure born in Mayne Reid was now for a time burning itself out, and the sparks from its dying embers kindled the poetic fire in his brain; and between the years 1842 and 1846 we hear of Mayne Reid as a poet, newspaper correspondent, and editor.

In the autumn of 1842 he had reached Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Here he contributed poetry to the *Pittsburg Chronicle* under the *nom-de-plume* of the "Poor Scholar." At this time he encountered many hardships in his efforts to make a livelihood by his pen. And but for the kind friends he found among some Irish residents in Pittsburg, it would have fared much harder in the cold severe winter of that city with our struggling young author.

By the following spring, 1843, Mayne Reid travelled on to Philadelphia, and settled down in that *city, devoting* all his energies to literature. His best

productions appeared in a monthly magazine of high class, called *Godey's Ladies' Book*, the most ambitious of his efforts being a poem entitled "La Cubana: a Romance of the Isles." It ran through four numbers of the magazine from February to May, 1845. The metre is musical, and bears a certain resemblance to Byron's "Corsair." The following few lines are an extract from "La Cubana":—

"The muleteer, mounting, homeward turns his face,
And goads his laden mule to quicker pace;
The weary slave from out the field of cane
A moment glances at the far free main,
And sighs as he bethinks him of his chain.
Short-lived and silent is his thought of pain,
For, stopping in his task while it is on,
He reads relief in yonder setting sun,
For 'tis the herald of his labour done!
The poor Bozal, who knows not yet to pray,
Thinks of his wife and children far away,
In some rude kraal by Biafra's bay.
But where are they, that mild and gentle race,
Who worshipped him with prostrate form and face
Where is the palm-screened hut of the cacique,
That once rose over yon barranca's brow?
Where are they all? Son of the island, speak!
Where the Bohio stood, domes, turrets now
Alone along the hill-sides proudly gleam!
Ha! thou art sad and silent on the theme;
But in thy silence I can read their doom—
Name, nation, all, have passed into the tomb.
The tomb? No—no; they have not even one
To tell that they were once, and now are gone!
. . . . . .
The fading light grows purple on the deep,
In gorgeous robes the god hath sunk to sleep;

So sets the sun o'er Cuba, with a smile—
The sweetest that he sheds upon this southern isle!"

As a tribute to his native land, Mayne Reid wrote at this time the following poem, which he called "The Land of Innisfail":—

"And I must leave thee, Erin! 'tis my fate—
And I must wander over many a land!
The 'Scholar' wasted, worn—but may this hand
That writes thy praises now cold on the sand
Unburied lie for ever—may no hearth
Shelter me, vagrant on a foreign strand,
The cursed and homeless outcast of the earth,
When I forget thou art the country of my birth!
Erin, I love thee! though thy sunken cheek
Is pale with weeping, and thy hollow eye,
With many a stifled groan and rending shriek,
Reveals dark tales of bitter agony:
That I have pitied thy sad misery
I've proved through every change of land and sea;
I've wafted o'er the ocean many a sigh,
And many an earnest prayer that thou shouldst be,
As are thy children's souls, unshackled, happy, free!
I love thee, though I could not live with thee!
The trampler of thy fields, red with gore,
Had made my home a hell—I would not be
The fawning minion at a great man's door;
I would not beg upon thy wintry moor
To starve neglected; and soon as I knew
That there were other lands, the broad seas o'er,
With hands to welcome, and with hearts as true—
I dropped one tear, and bid my native land adieu!"

Although Mayne Reid had given up play-acting *himself*, he now wrote a tragedy in five acts, called

"Love's Martyr." It was completed at Philadelphia, November 20, 1846. This date is in the author's own handwriting in the MS., which is in the possession of his widow. Mayne Reid first called the play "Fatal Love; or, The Husband." It was performed at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, James William Wallack taking the leading part. The following extract will give the reader some idea of its poetic and pathetic merit:—

(*Enter* MARINELLA *and* LORD CASIMIR.)

Cas. Marinella!

Mar. My lord!

Cas. Why do you start?

Mar. Your voice, my lord, was sudden. I knew not you were here.

Cas. Have you seen Basil yet?

Mar. I have, my lord; he's bid farewell to me.

Cas. You will feel sad at his departure?

Mar. Yes, sad indeed. I do, my lord.

Cas. 'Tis natural at parting with a friend—one so endeared as Basil is to you.

Mar. Would he would speak upon some other theme!

Cas. I, too, regret the cause that carries him away from us.

Mar. The cause, my lord?

Cas. Oh, yes. He goes to France to better his condition. When I learnt the true cause of his leaving, I did wish he might remain with us. 'Tis not too late; and I shall use entreaty to that end.

Mar. No—no, my lord!

Cas. No? Why not?

Mar. Why—that—I would not he should lose his opportunity of winning fame—and fortune, too. He much desires to go—let him proceed, my lord!

Cas. Oh! noble sacrifice of a pure woman's heart! Marinella!

Mar. My lord!

Cas. I have a tale for you.

Mar. What is't, my lord?

[CASIMIR *brings forward chairs. They sit.*

Cas. Far from the echoes of a troubled world, within the soft embrace of vine-clad hills, there lay a sunny vale, in whose warm lap and art divine, and nature more divine, poured out their wealth in very wantonness—a valley of bright fields and emerald groves, above whose glowing foliage lordly towers rose to the sapphire sky. Upon the ear there fell no sounds that were not musical—the songs of birds and bees and falling waters—the voice of Nature's God, as soft and sweet as when it thrilled through earth's first paradise! The winds were never rude—no storms came there; alone the breeze, from the blue Appenines, stole softly down among the perfumed trees, filling the air with incense! It was indeed a scene of loveliness; and over all hung a rich canopy of blue and gold—the sky of Italy.

Mar. Oh! sweet, sweet scene! how like our own dear home!

Cas. Within this vale, a maid of noble lineage had been reared. She was indeed the ideal of her sex—the bright embodiment of love itself. Of form so lovely—so divine a face, it seemed as if the spirit of the place had gendered her from out its glowing flowers to make the picture perfect!

Mar. How beautiful!

Cas. This maiden had a brother—a brave youth; her father, too, still lived—a noble lord—the sole possessor of all these fair scenes, 'midst which they dwelt in innocence and peace, unclouded as their skies. A stranger came from a far distant land and sought this quiet vale. He was a kinsman, and at once became its owner's welcome guest—companion of the maiden and her brother. He was their elder—yet had never loved; for his young days had all been rudely spent within the camp, or on the battle-field. But the rare beauty of this glowing maid soon stamped its image on his yielding heart; and he did *love, as only* they can love whose youth's and manhood's flame

have but been blent into one burning passion! He was not skilled in love's diplomacy, and knew not even how to woo the maid. He told the good old father of his love: who wooed and won her for him. They were wed. She then was but a child, and little knew the nature of that vow; but the old lord, fearing a malady that vexed him much, desired thus soon to see his daughter wedded. Close on the bridal morning, the father died—so suddenly, that there was no one near save his confessor—whom he gave in charge confession that the youth, whom all the world supposed his son, and brother of the maid, was not his son, nor yet the maiden's brother!

Mar. How strange, my lord! how like—

Cas. Nay, hear me, Marinella, to the end. This sad confession was made known to all—the stranger lord, the maiden, and the youth—but they had grown together three such friends they would not part; but lived, like as before, in the sweet commune of the common hearth. Now grows my tale more sad. In time the maiden found, within her heart, a feeling undefined, which never yet had centred there, or only as a dream. It soon became developed—it was love! love not for him whom she had vowed to love, but for the foster-brother! The youth, too, loved the maid. Nature had placed the germ within their hearts, where it had lain amidst the darkness of an erring fate, till Nature called it forth to bud and bloom. Each sorrowed for their love—each struggled hard to stifle it. When they had striven in vain, lest that their friend might suffer from the thing, each then resolved to see the other one no more on earth. . . .

During Mayne Reid's residence in Philadelphia he made the acquaintance of Edgar Allan Poe, and a warm friendship was thenceforth established between the two men. After the appearance of Dr. Griswold's unjust biography of the dead poet, Mayne Reid thus defended the character of his misjudged friend:—

"Nearly a quarter of a century ago, I knew a man named Edgar Allan Poe. I knew him as well as one man may know another, after an intimate and almost daily association extending over a period of two years. He was then a reputed poet; I only an humble admirer of the Muses.

"But it is not of his poetic talent I here intend to speak. I never myself had a very exalted opinion of it—more especially as I knew that the poem upon which rests the head corner-stone of his fame is not the creation of Edgar Allan Poe, but of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship' you will find the original of the 'Raven.' I mean the tune, the soft-flowing measure, the imagery and a good many of the words—even the 'rustling of the soft and silken curtain.'

"This does not seem like defending the dead poet; nor, as a poet, is his defence intended. I could do it better were I to speak of his prose, which for classic diction and keen analytic power has not been surpassed in the republic of letters. Neither to speak of his poetry, or his prose, have I taken up the pen; but of what is, in my opinion, of much more importance than either—his moral character. Contrary to my estimate, the world believes him to have been a great poet; and there are few who will question his transcendent talents as a writer of prose. But the world also believes him to have been a blackguard; and there are but few who seem to dissent from this doctrine.

"I am one of this few; and I shall give my reasons, drawing them from my own knowledge of the man. *In attempting* to rescue his maligned memory from

the clutch of his calumniators, I have no design to represent Edgar Allan Poe as a model of what a man ought to be, either morally or socially. I desire to obtain for him only strict justice; and if this be accorded, I have no fear that those according it will continue to regard him as the monster he has been hitherto depicted. Rather may it be that the hideous garment will be transferred from his to the shoulders of his hostile biographer.

"When I first became acquainted with Poe, he was living in a suburban district of Philadelphia, called Spring Garden. I have not been there for twenty years, and, for aught I know, it may now be in the centre of that progressive city. It was then a quiet, residential neighbourhood, noted as the chosen quarter of the Quakers.

"Poe was no Quaker; but I remember well he was next-door neighbour to one. And in this wise: that while the wealthy co-religionist of William Penn dwelt in a splendid four-storey house, built of the beautiful coral-coloured bricks for which Philadelphia is celebrated, the poet lived in a lean-to of three rooms—there may have been a garret, with a closet—of painted plank construction, supported against the gable of the more pretentious dwelling.

"If I remember aright, the Quaker was a dealer in cereals. He was also Poe's landlord; and, I think, rather looked down upon the poet—though not from any question of character, but simply from his being fool enough to figure as a scribbler and a poet.

"In this humble domicile I can say that I have spent some of the pleasantest hours of my life—certainly some of the most intellectual. They were

passed in the company of the poet himself and his wife—a lady angelically beautiful in spirit. No one who remembers that dark-eyed, dark-haired daughter of Virginia—her own name, if I rightly remember—her grace, her facial beauty, her demeanour, so modest as to be remarkable, no one who has ever spent an hour in her company but will endorse what I have said above. I remember how we, the friends of the poet, used to talk of her high qualities. And when we talked of her beauty, I well knew that the rose-tint upon her cheek was too bright, too pure to be of earth—that sadly-beautiful light which betokens an early tomb.

"In the little lean-to, besides the poet and his interesting wife, there was but one other dweller. This was a woman of middle age, and almost masculine aspect. She had the size and figure of a man, with a countenance that at first sight seemed scarce feminine. A stranger would have been incredulous—surprised, as I was—when introduced to her as the mother of that angelic creature who had accepted Edgar Poe as the partner of her life.

"Such was the relationship; and when you came to know this woman better, the masculinity of her person disappeared before the truly feminine nature of her mind; and you saw before you a type of those grand American mothers—such as existed in the days when block-houses had to be defended, bullets run in red-hot saucepans, and guns loaded for sons and husbands to fire them. Just such a woman was the mother-in-law of the poet Poe. If not called upon to defend her home and family against the assaults of the Indian savage, she was against that as

ruthless, as implacable, and almost as difficult to repel—poverty. She was the ever-vigilant guardian of the house, watching it against the silent but continuous sap of necessity, that appeared every day to be approaching closer and nearer. She was the sole servant, keeping everything clean; the sole messenger doing the errands, making pilgrimages between the poet and his publishers, frequently bringing back such chilling responses as 'The article not accepted,' or 'The cheque not to be given until such-and-such a day'—often too late for his necessities.

"And she was also messenger to the market; from it bringing back not the 'delicacies of the season,' but only such commodities as were called for by the dire exigencies of hunger. And yet there were some delicacies. I shall never forget how, when peaches were in season and cheap, a pottle of these, the choicest gifts of Pomona, were divested of their skins by the delicate fingers of the poet's wife, and left to the 'melting mood,' to be amalgamated with Spring Garden cream and crystallised sugar, and then set before such guests as came in by chance.

"Reader! I know you acknowledge this to be a picture of tranquil domestic happiness; and I think you will believe me when I tell you that it is truthful. But I know also you will ask, 'What has it to do with the poet?' since it seems to reflect all the credit on his wife, and the woman who called him her son-in-law. For all yet said it may seem so; but I am now to say that which may give it a different aspect.

"During the two years of intimate personal association with Edgar Allan Poe, I found in him the

following phases of character, accomplishment, and disposition:

"First, I discovered rare genius; not at all of the poetic order, not even of the fanciful, but far more of a practical kind, shown in a power of analytic reasoning such as few men possess; and which would have made him the finest detective policeman in the world. Vidocq would have been a simpleton beside him.

"Secondly, I encountered a scholar of rare accomplishments—especially skilled in the lore of Northern Europe, and more imbued with it than with the southern and strictly classic. How he had drifted into this speciality I never knew; but he had it in a high degree, as is apparent throughout all his writings, some of which read like an echo of the Scandinavian Sagas.

"Thirdly, I felt myself in communication with a man of original character, disputing many of the received doctrines and dogmas of the day; but only original in so far as to dispute them, altogether regardless of consequences to himself or the umbrage he gave to his adversaries.

"Fourthly, I saw before me a man to whom vulgar rumour had attributed those personal graces supposed to attract the admiration of women. This is the usual description given of him in biographical sketches. And why, I cannot tell, unless it has been done to round off a piquant paragraph. His was a face purely intellectual. Women might admire it, thinking of this; but it is doubtful if many ever fell, or could have fallen, in love with the man to whom it *belonged.* I don't think many ever did. It was

enough for one man to be beloved by one such woman as he had for his wife.

"Fifthly, I feel satisfied that Edgar Allan Poe was not what his slanderers have represented him, a rake. I know he was not; but in truth the very opposite. I have been his companion in one or two of his wildest frolics, and can certify that they never went beyond the innocent mirth in which we all indulge when Bacchus gets the better of us. With him the jolly god sometimes played fantastic tricks—to the stealing away of his brain, and sometimes, too, his hat—leaving him to walk bareheaded through the streets at an hour when the sun shone too clearly on his crown, then prematurely bald.

"While acknowledging this as one of Poe's failings, I can speak truly of its not being habitual; only occasional, and drawn out by some accidental circumstance—now disappointment, now the occurrence of a social crowd, whose flattering friendship might lead to champagne, a single glass of which used to affect him so much that he was hardly any longer responsible for his actions, or the disposal of his hat.

"I have chronicled the poet's crimes, all that I ever knew him to be guilty of, and, indeed, all that can be honestly alleged against him; though many call him a monster. It is time to say a word of his virtues. I could expatiate upon these far beyond the space left me; or I might sum them up in a single sentence by saying that he was no worse and no better than most men.

"I have known him to be for a whole month closeted in his own house—the little 'shanty' supported against the gable of the rich Quaker—all

the time hard at work with his pen, poorly paid, and hard driven to keep the wolf from his slightly-fastened door, intruded on only by a few select friends, who always found him, what they knew him to be, a generous host, an affectionate son-in-law and husband; in short, a respectable gentleman.

"In the list of literary men, there has been no such spiteful biographer as Dr. Rufus Griswold, and never such a victim of posthumous spite as poor Edgar Allan Poe."[1]

[1] *Onward Magazine*, New York, 1869; established and edited by Mayne Reid. See Chapter XIV.

CHAPTER IV

Off to the Mexican War—Commissioned a Second Lieutenant—Later Intentions—Graphic Description of the Country—Landing of the Troops.

MAYNE REID left Philadelphia in the spring of 1846, spending the summer at Newport, Rhode Island, as correspondent to the *New York Herald*, under the name of "Ecolier." In September of the same year he was in New York, and had secured a post on Wilkes's *Spirit of the Times*.

But now the spirit of adventure once more awoke in the breast of Mayne Reid, and the battle-field was his goal. The war with Mexico was in the air. Regiments were being raised in New York for the invasion of Mexico to protect the United States territory, and Mayne Reid flung down his pen and tendered his services at the first call for volunteers. He obtained a commission as second lieutenant to the 1st New York Volunteers—the first regiment raised in New York for the Mexican War—and of which Ward B. Burnett was colonel, General Scott being at that time commander-in-chief of the

American army, and in January, 1847, Mayne Reid sailed with the regiment for Vera Cruz.

. . . . . .

A short time previous to his death, Mayne Reid conceived the idea of writing his personal reminiscences of the Mexican War, and had commenced to sketch out the opening chapters.

Alas! this work was never finished; the ink was scarcely dry on the last pages written before Mayne Reid took to the bed from which he never arose.

. . . . . .

The following description of the country and account of the invasion of Mexico, and of some of the principal and stirring scenes that followed, are given in Mayne Reid's own graphic and spirited words. In presenting these last memories to the public, Elizabeth Reid, his widow, feels that she is, in a measure, carrying out the author's latest design.

"During the first months of 1847 the look-out sentinel, stationed on the crenated parapet of San Juan d'Ulloa, must have seen an array of ships unusual in numbers for that coast so little frequented by mariners—equally unusual in the kind of craft and the men on board; for in addition to the half-score of ships flying the flags of different nations—some at anchor close to the castle, some under the lee of Sacrificios Isle—there was a stream of other craft out in the offing, not at anchor or lying to, but passing coastwise up and down beyond the most distant range of cannon shot: craft of every size and

speciality--schooners, brigs, barques, and square-rigged three-masters, from a 200-ton sloop to a ship of as many thousands. Not armed vessels either, though every one of them was loaded to the water-line either with armed and uniformed men or the materials of war; in the large ones a whole regiment of soldiers, in the less half a regiment, a consort ship containing the other half, and in some but two or three companies, all they were capable of accommodating.

"Some carried cavalrymen, with their horses, others artillerymen, with their mounts and batteries, while a large number were but laden with the senseless material of war tents, waggons, the effects coming under the head of commissariat and quartermaster stores. Not one out of twenty of these vessels was an actual man-of-war; but one might be seen leading and guiding a group of the others, as if their convoy to some known pre-arranged destination. Just this were they doing, escorting the transport ships to their anchorage pre-determined.

"Two such anchorages were there, quite thirty miles apart from one another, though in the diaphanous atmosphere of the Vera Cruz coast a bird of eagle eye soaring midway between could command a view of both. The one northernmost was the Isle of Lobos; that south, Punta Anton Lizardo. To the first I shall take the reader, as to it I was first taken myself.

"Lobos Islet lies off the Vera Cruz coast, opposite the town of Tuxpan, and about two miles. It is of circular form, and if I remember rightly, about a half-mile in diameter. Its availability as an anchorage comes from a surrounding of coral reefs,

with a gap in its northern side that admits ships into water the breakers cannot disturb. Chiefly is it a harbour of refuge against the dreaded norther of the Caribbean coast, and a vessel caught in one of these might run for it; but not likely, unless her papers were not presentable to the Vera Cruz Custom-House. If they were, the shelter under Sacrificios would be safer and easily reached.

"In later times the contrabandista is the man who has most availed himself of the advantages of Lobos, and in times more remote the filibusters; the Tuxpan fishermen also occasionally beach their boats upon it. But that neither buccaneer, smuggler, nor fisherman had frequented it lately, we had proof given us on landing on its shores by its real denizens, the birds. These several species of sea-fowl were very tame; they flew screaming over the heads of the soldiers so close that many were knocked down by their muskets. They became shy enough anon.

"We found the island covered all over with a thick growth of chaparral; it could not be called forest, as the tallest of the trees was but some fifteen or twenty feet in height. The species was varied, most of them of true tropical character, and amongst them was one that attracted general attention as being the "india-rubber tree." Whether it was the true *Siphonica elastica* I cannot say, though likely it was that or an allied species.

"The peculiarity of this isle, and one making it attractive to contrabandista and filibusters, is that fresh water is found on it. Near its summit centre, not over six feet above the ocean level, is a well or *hole*, artificially dug out in the sand, some six feet

deep. The water in this rises and falls with the tide, a law of hydraulics not well understood. Its taste is slightly brackish, but for all that was greatly relished by us—possibly from having been so long upon the cask-water of the transport ships. Near this well we found an old musket and loading pike, rust-eaten, and a very characteristic souvenir of the buccaneers; also the unburied skeleton of a man, who may have been one of their victims.

"The troops landed on Lobos were the 1st New York Volunteers, South Carolina; 1st and 2nd Pennyslvania, etc., etc. One of the objects in this debarkation was to give these new regiments an opportunity for drilling, such as the time might permit, before making descent upon the Mexican coast. But there was no drill ground there, as we saw as soon as we set foot on shore—not enough of open space to parade a single regiment in line, unless it were formed along the ribbon of beach.

"On discovery of this want, there followed instant action to supply it—a curious scene, hundreds of uniformed men plying axe and chopper, hewing and cutting, even the officers with their sabres slashing away at the chaparral of Lobos Island; a scene of great activity, and not without interludes of amusement, as now and then a snake, scorpion, or lizard, dislodged from its lair and attempting escape, drew a group of relentless enemies around it. In time, enough surface was cleared for camp and parade-ground. Then up went soldiers' bell tents and officers' marquees, in company rows and regimental, each regiment occupying its allotted ground.

"The old buccaneers may have caroused in Lobos,

but never could they have been merrier than we, nor had they ampler means for promoting cheer, even though resting there after a successful raid. Both our sutlers and the skippers of our transport ships, with keen eye to contingencies, were well provided with stories of the fancy sort; many a champagne cork had its wire cut on Lobos, and probably now, in that bare isle, would be found an array of empty bottles lying half buried in the sand.

"Any one curious about the life we led on Lobos Island will find some detailed description of it in a book I have written, called 'The Rifle Rangers,' given to the public as a romance, yet for all more of a reality.

"Our sojourn there was but brief, ending in a fortnight or so, still it may have done something to help out the design for which it was made. It got several regiments of green soldiers through the 'goose-step,' and, better still, taught them the ways of camp and campaigning life.

"(Mem.—A fright from threatened small-pox, trouble with insects, scorpions, and little crabs. Also curious case of lizard remaining on my tent ridge pole for days without moving. No wonder at Shakespeare's 'Chameleon feeding on air.' Amusements, stories, and songs; mingling of mariners with soldiers. Norther just after landing, well protected under Lobos.)

"*La Villa Rica de Vera Cruz* (the rich city of the True Cross) viewed from the sea, presents a picture unique and imposing. It vividly reminded me of the vignette engravings of cities in Goldsmith's old *geography*, from which I got my earliest lessons

about foreign lands. And just as they were bordered by the engraver's lines, so is Vera Cruz embraced by an *enciente* of wall. For it is a walled city, without suburbs, scarce a building of any kind beyond the parapet and fosse engirdling it. Roughly speaking, its ground plan is a half-circle, having the sea-shore for diameter, this not more than three-quarters of a mile in length. There is no beach or strand intervening between the houses and the sea, the former overlooking the latter, and protected from its wash by a breakwater buttress.

"The architecture is altogether unlike that of any American or English seaport of similar size. Substantially massive, yet full of graceful lines, most of the private dwellings are of the Hispano-Morsican order, flat-roofed and parapeted, while the public buildings, chiefly the churches, display a variety of domes, towers, and turrets worthy of Inigo Jones or Christopher Wren.

"From near the centre of the semi-circle a pier or mole, *El Muello*, projects about a hundred yards into the sea, and on this all visiting voyagers have to make landing, as at its inner end stands the Custom-House. Fronting this on an islet, or rather a reef of coral rocks, stands the fortress castle of San Juan d'Ulloa, off shore about a quarter of a mile. It is a low structure, with the usual caramite coverings and crenated parapet, surmounted by a watch and flag-tower.

"The anchorage near it is neither good nor ample, better being found under the lee of Sacrificios, a small treeless islet lying south of it nearly a league, and, luckily for us, beyond the range of Ulloa's guns,

as also those of a fort at the southern extremity of the city.

"Hundreds of ships may ride there in safety, though not so many nor so safe as at Anton Lizardo. Perhaps never so many, nor of such varied kind, were brought to under it as on March 9, 1847.

"The surf boats are worthy of a word, as without them our beaching would have been difficult and dangerous, if not impossible. They were of a whale-boat speciality, and, as I remember, of two sizes. The larger were built to carry two hundred men, the smaller half this number. Most of them were brought to Anton Lizardo in two large vessels, and so hastily had they been built and dispatched that there had not been time to paint them, all appearing in that pale slate colour known to painters as the priming coat. Of course, none had any decking, only the thwarts.

"The commander-in-chief had made requisition for 150 of these boats, though only sixty-nine arrived at Anton Lizardo in time to serve the purpose they were intended for.

"The capture of Vera Cruz was an event alike creditable to the army and navy of the United States, for both bore part in it; and creditable not only on account of the courage displayed, but the strategic skill. It was, in truth, one of those *coups* in which boldness was backed up by intelligence even to cunning, this last especially shown in the way we effected a landing.

"The fleet, as already said, lay at Anton Lizardo, each day receiving increase from new arrivals. When *at length* all that were expected had come to anchor

there, the final preparations were made for descent upon the land of Montezuma, and all we now waited for was a favouring wind. I do not remember how many steam vessels we had, but I think only two or three. Could we have commanded the services of a half-score steam tugs, the landing might have been effected at an earlier date.

"The day came when the wind proved all that was wanted. A light southerly breeze, blowing up the coast almost direct for Vera Cruz, had declared itself before sunrise, and by earliest daybreak all was activity. Alongside each transport ship, as also some of the war vessels, would be seen one or more of the great lead-coloured boats already alluded to, with streams of men backing down the man-ropes and taking seats in them. These men were soldiers in uniform and full marching order—knapsacks strapped on, haversacks filled and slung, cartouche-box on hip, and gun in hand. In perfect order was the transfer made from ship to boat, and, when in the boats, each company had its own place same as on a parade-ground. Where it was a boat that held two companies, one occupied the forward thwarts, the other the stern, their four officers (captain, first lieutenant, second, and brevet) conforming to their respective places. But there were other than soldiers in the boat, each having its complement of sailors from the ships.

"A gun from the ship that carried our commander-in-chief gave the signal for departure from Punta Anton Lizardo, and, while its boom was still reverberating, ship after ship was seen to spread sail; then one after another, under careful pilotage, slipped out through the roadway of the coral reef, steam-

ing up coast straight for Vera Cruz, the doomed city.

"While sweeping up the coast, I can perfectly remember what my own feelings were, and how much I admired the strategy of the movement. Who should get credit for it I cannot tell; but I can hardly think that Winfield Scott's was the head that planned this enterprise, my after-experience with this man guiding me to regard him as a soldier incapable —in short, such as late severe critics have called him, 'Fuss and feathers.' 'The hasty plate of soup' was then ringing around his name. Whoever planned it is deserving of great praise. Its ingenuity, misleading our enemy, lay in making the latter believe that we intended to make a landing at Anton Lizardo. Hence all the disposable force that could be spared from the garrison at Vera Cruz was there to oppose us. And when our ships hastily drew in anchor and went straight for Vera Cruz, as hawks at unprotected quarry, these detached garrison troops saw the mistake they had made. The coast road from Vera Cruz to Anton Lizardo is cut by numerous streams, all bridgeless. To cross them safely needed taking many a roundabout route—so many that the swiftest horse could not reach Vera Cruz so soon as our slowest ship, and we were there before them. We did not aim to enter the port nor come within range of its defending batteries, least of all those of San Juan d'Ulloa. The islet of Sacrificios, about a league from the latter, whose southern end affords sheltering anchorage, was the point we aimed at; and there our miscellaneous flotilla became concentrated, some of *the ships* dropping anchor, others remaining adrift.

Then the beaching boats, casting off hawsers, were rowed straight for the shore, about half a mile off. A shoal strand it was, where a boat's keel touched bottom long before reaching dry land. That in which I was did so, and well do I remember how myself and comrades at once sprang over the gunwales, and, waist deep, waded out to the sand-strewn shore.

"There we encountered no enemy—nothing to obstruct us. All the antagonism we met with or saw was a stray shot or two from some long-range guns mounted on the parapet of the most southern fort of the city. But our feet were now surely planted on the soil of Mexico."

CHAPTER V

"Sketches of a Skirmisher"—Siege and Capture of Vera Cruz—Battles of Cerro Gordo, Contreras, and Churubusco—An Amusing Mishap—Influence over his Men.

BEFORE continuing Mayne Reid's spirited account, it is appropriate at this place to briefly refer to the first of a series of articles commenced while he was stationed at Vera Cruz. These were entitled "Sketches of a Skirmisher," and were published in the New York *Spirit of the Times*, over the *nom-de-plume* "Ecolier." The first paper, dated "American Lines behind Vera Cruz, March 20, 1847," and published in the issue of May 1, contained the following subjects: "The Sand-Hills of Vera Cruz," "The Rancho and the Ranchero," "An Encounter with Guerillas," and "An Encounter with Girls, not Guerillas."

Several columns of space were occupied, and the reader of these sketches was no doubt loath to reach the last line, for they were written in that entertaining style so peculiar to the writer. A brief extract

from the first sketch, "The Sand-Hills of Vera Cruz," is subjoined:—

"What a glorious sunset! What a lovely land! The lone peak of Orizaon and the long cordillera of the Mexican Andes stretches along the western sky, distinguished from it only by their outline of deeper blue. The hill upon which I sit and write is one vast pile of sand, myself the only living object to be seen upon the undulating surface. On my left, and far beneath, the blue smoke of the camp-fires oozes slowly up among the leaves of the thick chaparral; over a little knoll, cleared of its thicket, waves the flag of our own land, kissed by the declining beams of a Mexican sun. In the distance, as far as sight can reach, stretch the green forests of the south. Eastward and at my feet lies cradled the leagured city, so near that I almost fancy I can touch its spires with my pencil. Beyond, the blue sea, with its white breakers, the bold castle of San Juan, and—stirring sight!—a fleet of a hundred sail off the Isle of Sacrificios, each wearing on its peak the starry flag of the North!"

. . . . . .

"The capture of Vera Cruz," continues the account of Mayne Reid, "was an affair of artillery. The city was bombarded for several days by a semi-circle of batteries placed upon the sand-hills in its rear. It at length surrendered, and with it the celebrated castle of San Juan d'Ulloa.

"During the siege a few of us who were fond of fighting found opportunities of being shot at in the back country. The sand-hills—resembling Murlock

Banks, only more extensive—form a semi-circle round Vera Cruz. The city itself, compactly built, and of picturesque appearance, stands upon a low, sandy plain—semi-circular, of course—the sea-shore being the boundary diameter. Behind the hills of sand, for leagues inward, extends a low, jungly country, covered with the forests of tropical America. This, like all the coast-lands of Mexico, is called the *tierra caliente* (hot land). This region is far from being uninhabited. These thickets have their clearings and their cottages, the latter of the most temporary construction that may serve the wants of man in a climate of almost perpetual summer. There are also several villages scattered through this part of the *tierra caliente.*

"During the siege the inhabitants of these cottages (*ranchos*) and villages banded together under the name *jarochos* or *guerrilleros*, but better known to our soldiers by the general title *rancheros*, and kept up a desultory warfare in our rear, occasionally committing murders on straggling parties of soldiers who had wandered from our lines.

"Several expeditions were sent out against them, but with indifferent success. I was present in many of these expeditions, and on one occasion, when in command of about thirty men, I fell in with a party of *guerrilleros*, nearly a hundred strong, routed them, and, after a straggling fight of several hours, drove them back upon a strong position, the village of Medellini. In this skirmish I was fired at by from fifty to a hundred muskets and escopettes, and, although at the distance of not over two hundred yards, had the good fortune to escape being *hit.*

"One night I was in command of a scouting party to reconnoitre a guerilla camp supposed to be some five miles away in the country. It was during the mid-hours of the night, but under one of those brilliant moonlights for which the cloudless sky of Mexico is celebrated. Near the edge of an opening —the prairie of Santa Fe—our party was brought suddenly to a halt at the sight of an object that filled every one of us with horror. It was the dead body of a soldier, a member of the corps to which the scouting party belonged. The body lay at full length upon its back; the hair was clotted with blood, and standing out in every direction; the teeth were clenched in agony, the eyes glassy and open, as if glaring upon the moon that shone in mid-heaven above. One arm had been cut off at the elbow, while a large incision in the left breast showed where the heart had been torn out, to satisfy the vengeance of an inhuman enemy. There were shot-wounds and sword-cuts all over the body, and other mutilations made by the zopilotes and wolves. Notwithstanding all, it was recognised as that of a brave young soldier, who was much esteemed by his comrades, and who for two days had been missing from the camp. He had imprudently strayed beyond the line of pickets, and fallen into the hands of the enemy's *guerrilleros*.

"The men would not pass on without giving to his mutilated remains the last rites of burial. There was neither spade nor shovel to be had, but, fixing bayonets, they dug up the turf, and depositing the body, gave it such sepulture as was possible. One who had been his bosom *friend*, cutting a slip from a

bay laurel close by, planted it in the grave. The ceremony was performed in deep silence, for they knew that they were on dangerous ground, and that a single shout or shot at that moment might have been the signal for their destruction.

"I afterwards learnt that this fiendish act was partly due to a spirit of retaliation. One of the American soldiers, a very brutal fellow, shot a Mexican, a young *jarocho* peasant, who was seen near the roadside chopping some wood with his machete. It was an act of sheer wantonness, or for sport, just as a thoughtless boy might fire at a bird to see whether he could kill it. Fortunately the Mexican was not killed, but his elbow was shattered by the shot so badly that the whole arm required amputation. It was the wantonness of the act that provoked retaliation; and after this the *lex talionis* became common around Vera Cruz, and was practised in all its deadly severity long after the place was taken. Several other American soldiers, straying thoughtlessly beyond the lines, suffered in the same way, their bodies being found mutilated in a precisely similar manner. Strange to say, the man who was the cause of this vengeance became himself one of its victims. Not then, at Vera Cruz, but long afterwards, in the Valley of Mexico; and this was the strangest part of it. Shortly after the American army entered the capital, his body was found in the canal of Las Vigas, alongside the *Chinampas*, or floating gardens, gashed all over with wounds made by the knives of assassins, and mutilated just as the others had been. It might have been a mere coincidence, but it was supposed at the time that the one-

armed *jarocho* must have followed him up with that implacable spirit of vengeance characteristic of his race, until at length, finding him alone, he had completed his vendetta.

"Vera Cruz being taken, we marched for the interior. Puente Nacional, the next strong point, had been fortified, but the enemy, deeming it too weak, fell back upon Cerro Gordo, another strong pass about twenty miles from the former. Here they were again completely routed, although numbering three times our force. In this action I was cheated out of the opportunity of having my name recorded by the cowardice or imbecility of the major of my regiment, who on that day commanded the detachment of which I formed part. In an early part of the action I discovered a large body of the enemy escaping through a narrow gorge running down the face of a high precipice. The force which this officer commanded had been sufficient to have captured these fugitives, but he not only refused to go forward, but refused to give me a sufficient command to accomplish the object. I learnt afterwards that Santa Anna, commander-in-chief of the Mexican army, had escaped by this gorge.

"After the victory of Cerro Gordo, the army pushed forward to Jalapa, a fine village half-way up the table-lands. After a short rest here we again took the road, and crossing a spur of the Cordilleras, swept over the plains of Perote, and entered the city of Puebla. Yes, with a force of 3,000 men we entered that great city, containing a population of at least 75,000. The inhabitants were almost paralysed with astonishment and mortification at seeing the

smallness of our force. The balconies, windows, and house-tops were crowded with spectators; and there were enough men in the streets—had they been men—to have stoned us to death. At Puebla we halted for reinforcements a period of about two months.

"In the month of August, 1847, we numbered about 12,000 effective men, and leaving a small garrison here, with the remainder, 10,000, we took the road for the capital. The city of Mexico lies about eighty miles from Puebla. Half-way, another spur of the Andes must be crossed. On the 10th of August, with an immense siege and baggage-train, we moved over these pine-clad hills, and entered the Valley of Mexico. Here halt was made for reconnaissance, which lasted several days. The city stands in the middle of a marshy plain interspersed with lakes, and is entered by eight roads or causeways. These were known to be fortified, but especially that which leads through the gate San Lazare, on the direct road to Puebla. This was covered by a strong work on the hill El Piñol, and was considered by General Scott as next to impregnable. To turn this, a wide diversion to the north or south was necessary. The latter was adopted, and an old road winding around Lake Chalco—through the old town of that name, and along the base of the southern mountain ridge—was found practicable.

"We took this road, and after a slow march of four days our van-guard debouched on the great National Road, which rounds southward from the city of Mexico to Acapulco. This road was strongly fortified, and it was still further resolved to turn the fortifications on it by making more to the west. San Augustin de las

Cuenas, a village five leagues from Mexico on the National Road, became the point of reserve. On the 19th of August, General Worth moved down the National Road, as a feint to hold the enemy in check at San Antonio (strongly fortified), while the divisions of Generals Worth and Twiggs, with the brigade of Shields—to which I was attached—commenced moving across the Pedregal, a tract of country consisting of rocks, jungle and lava, and almost impassable. On the evening of the 19th we had crossed the Pedregal, and become engaged with a strong body of the enemy under General Valencia, at a place called Contreras. Night closed on the battle, and the enemy still held its position.

"It rained all night; we sat, not slept, in the muddy lanes of a poor village, San Geronimo—a dreadful night. Before daylight, General Persifer Smith, who commanded in this battle, had taken his measures, and shortly after sunrise we were at it again. In less than an hour that army 'of the North,' as Valencia's division was styled, being men of San Luis Potosi and other northern states, the flower of the Mexican army, was scattered and in full flight for the city of Mexico.

"The army was 6,000 strong, backed by a reserve of 6,000 more under Santa Anna himself. The reserve did not act, owing, it was said, to some jealousy between Valencia and Santa Anna. In this battle we captured a crowd of prisoners and twenty-seven pieces of artillery.

"The road, as we supposed, was now open to the city; a great mistake, as the sharp skirmishes which our light troops encountered as we advanced soon led

us to believe. All at once we stumbled upon the main body of the enemy, collected behind two of the strongest field works I have ever seen, in a little village called Churubusco.

"The road to the village passed over a small stream spanned by a bridge, which was held in force by the Mexicans, and it soon became evident that, unless something like a flank movement was made, they would not be dislodged. The bridge was well fortified, and the army attacked fruitlessly in front.

"General Shields' brigade was ordered to go round by the hacienda of Los Portales and attack the enemy on the flank. They got as far as the barns at Los Portales, but would go no farther. They were being shot down by scores, and the men eagerly sought shelter behind walls or wherever else it could be found. Colonel Ward B. Burnett made a desperate attempt to get the companies together, but it was unsuccessful, and he himself fell badly wounded.

"The situation had become very critical. I was in command of the Grenadier Company of New York Volunteers, and saw that a squadron of Mexican Lancers were getting ready to charge, and knew that if they came on while the flanking party were in such a state of disorganisation the fight would end in a rout. On the other hand, if we charged on them, the chances were the enemy would give way and run. In any case, nothing could be worse than the present state of inaction and slaughter.

"The lieutenant-colonel of the South Carolina Volunteers—their colonel, Butler, having been *wounded*, was not on the field—was carrying the

blue palmetto flag of the regiment. I cried out to him:

"'Colonel, will you lead the men on a charge?'

"Before he could answer, I heard something snap, and the colonel fell, with one leg broken at the ankle by a shot. I took the flag, and as the wounded officer was being carried off the field, he cried:

"'Major Gladden, take the flag. Captain Blanding, remember Moultrie, Loundes, and old Charleston!'

"Hurrying back to my men, reaching them on the extreme right, I rushed on in front of the line, calling out:

"'Soldiers, will you follow me to the charge?'

"'Ve vill!' shouted Corporal Haup, a Swiss.

"The order to charge being given, away we went, the Swiss and John Murphy, a brave Irishman, being the first two after their leader—myself.

"The Mexicans, seeing cold steel coming towards them with such gusto, took to their heels and made for the splendid road leading to the city of Mexico, which offered unequalled opportunities for flight.

"A broad ditch intervened between the highway and the field across which we were charging. Thinking this was not very deep, as it was covered with a green scum, I plunged into it. It took me nearly up to the armpits, and I struggled out all covered with slime and mud. The men avoided my mishap, coming to the road by a dryer but more roundabout path."

(A newspaper correspondent and eye-witness, in describing this amusing incident, said that "as Reid

struggled out, covered with slime and mud, he was a sight for gods and men!")

"As we got on the road," continues Mayne Reid, "Captain Phil Kearney came thundering over the bridge with his company, all mounted on dappled greys. The gallant Phil had a weakness for dappled greys. As they approached I sang out:

"'Boys, have you breath enough left to give a cheer for Captain Kearney?'

"Phil acknowledged the compliment with a wave of his sword, as he went swinging by towards the works the enemy had thrown up across this road. Just as he reached this spot, the recall bugle sounded, and at that moment Kearney received the shot that cost him an arm.

"Disregarding the bugle call, we of the infantry kept on, when a rider came tearing up, calling upon us to halt.

"'What for?' I cried.

"'General Scott's orders.'

"'We shall rue this halt,' was my rejoinder. 'The city is at our mercy; we can take it now, and should.'

"Lieut.-Colonel Baxter, then in command of the New York Volunteers, called out:

"'For God's sake, Mayne Reid, obey orders, and halt the men.'

"At this appeal I faced round to my followers, and shouted 'Halt!' The soldiers came up abreast of me, and one big North Irishman cried:

"'Do you say halt?'

"I set my sword towards them, and again shouted 'Halt!' This time I was obeyed, the soldiers crying *out:*

"'We'll halt for you, sir, but for nobody else.'"

. . . . . .

From the above incident, it may well be inferred that Mayne Reid possessed great influence over his men. And such was the fact; his great courage on all occasions, and his genial nature, utter impartiality, and fine sense of justice endeared him to his followers.

The following amusing incident, copied from the editorial columns of the New York *Spirit of the Times*, of January 22, 1847, illustrates the last-mentioned trait of Mayne Reid:—

"Lieutenant Mayne Reid, commanding Company B (the Grenadiers) of the New York Regiment, has in his company two German soldiers—one brave fellow, who fought like a tiger during the whole of the bloody action at the hacienda of Los Portales; while the other, a cowardly rascal, had stolen from the ranks on the morning of the engagement, and remained behind to plunder a Mexican hacienda.

"On the morning after the battle, as the lieutenant was visiting the quarters of his company, he observed these two soldiers in the act of making their toilet. The former was vainly endeavouring to guide his feet through the mazes of a very dilapidated pair of pantaloons that had been literally shot off his legs during the action, while the latter was very complacently admiring the set of an elegant pair of blue cassimeres which he had stolen on the previous night

from some unfortunate Mexican gentleman, and which fitted him to a hair.

"The lieutenant, acquainted with the previous conduct of both parties, called the latter, and ordered a 'swap' instanter. The process of undressing, swapping, and redressing drew around the spot a crowd of their comrades, who were so pleased with this instance of summary justice that a cheer rang round the walls of the hacienda, and one fellow, as he limped off on his wooden leg, declared that it was the best thing he had 'seed did' during the whole campaign."

CHAPTER VI

Assault and Capture of Chapultepec—Severely Wounded—Tribute to his Former Lieutenant—Capture of the City of Mexico—Official Mention—Promotion.

MAYNE REID continues his narrative:—

"Thus was the American army halted in its victorious career on the 20th of August. Another hour and it would have been in the streets of Mexico. The commander-in-chief, however, had other designs; and with the bugle recall that summoned the dragoons to retire, all hostile operations ended for the time. The troops slept upon the field.

"On the following day the four divisions of the American army separated for their respective headquarters in different villages. Worth crossed over to Tacubaya, which became the headquarters of the army; Twiggs held the village of San Angel; Pillow rested at Miscuac, a small Indian village between San Angel and Tacubaya, while the Volunteer and Marine division fell back on San Augustine. An armistice had been entered into between the commanders-in-chief of the two armies.

"This armistice was intended to facilitate a treaty of peace; for it was thought that the Mexicans would accept any terms rather than see their ancient city at the mercy of a foreign army. No doubt, however, a

great mistake was made, as the armistice gave the crafty Santa Anna a chance to fortify an inner line of defence, the key to which was the strong Castle of Chapultepec, which had to be taken three weeks later with the loss of many brave men.

"The commissioners of both governments met at a small village near Tacubaya, and the American commissioner demanded, as a necessary preliminary to peace, the cession of Upper and Lower California, all New Mexico, Texas, parts of Sonora, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas. Although this was in general a wild, unsettled tract of country, yet it constituted more than one-half the territory of Mexico, and the Mexican commissioners would not, even if they dared, agree to such a dismemberment.

"The armistice was therefore abortive, and on the 6th of September the American commander-in-chief sent a formal notice to the enemy that it had ceased to exist. This elicited from Santa Anna an insulting reply, and on the same day the enemy was seen in great force to the left of Tacubaya, at a building called Molino del Rey, which was a large stone mill, with foundry, belonging to the Government, and where most of their cannon had been made. It is a building notorious in the annals of Mexican history as the place where the unfortunate Texan prisoners suffered the most cruel treatment from their barbarous captors. It lies directly under the guns of Chapultepec, from which it is distant about a quarter of a mile, and it is separated from the hill of Chapultepec by a thick wood of almond trees.

"On the afternoon of the 7th of September, *Captain Mason*, of the Engineers, was sent to recon-

noitre the enemy's position. His right lay at a strong stone building, with bastions, at some distance from Molino del Rey, while his left rested on the works round the latter.

"The building on the right is Casa Mata. It is presumed that this position of the enemy was taken to prevent our army from turning the Castle of Chapultepec, and entering the city by the Tacubaya Road and the gate San Cosme. All the other *garitas*—Piedas, Nino Perdido, San Antonio and Belen—were strongly fortified, and guarded by a large body of the enemy's troops. Having in all at this time about 30,000 men, they had no difficulty in placing a strong guard at every point of attack.

"On the 7th, General Worth was ordered to attack and carry the enemy's lines at Molino del Rey. His attack was to be planned on the night of the 7th, and executed on the morning of the 8th.

"On the night of the 7th, the 1st Division, strengthened by a brigade of the 3rd, moved forward in front of the enemy. The dispositions made were as follows:—

"It was discovered that the weakest point of the enemy's lines was at a place about midway between the Casa Mata and Molino del Rey. This point, however, was strengthened by a battery of several guns.

"An assaulting party of 500 men, commanded by Major Wright, were detailed to attack the battery, after it had been cannonaded by Captain Huger with the battering guns. To the right of this assaulting party Garland's brigade took position within supporting distance.

"On our left, and to the enemy's right, Clark's brigade, commanded by Brevet-Colonel Mackintosh, with Duncan's battery, were posted; while the supporting brigade from Pillow's division lay between the assaulting column and Clark's brigade.

"At break of day the action commenced. Huger, with the 24th, opened on the enemy's centre. Every discharge told, and the enemy seemed to retire. No answer was made from his guns. Worth, becoming at length convinced—fatal conviction—that the works in the centre had been abandoned, ordered the assaulting column to advance.

"These moved rapidly down the slope, Major Wright leading. When they had arrived within about half musket shot the enemy opened upon this gallant band the most dreadful fire it has ever been the fate of a soldier to sustain. Six pieces from the field battery played upon their ranks; while the heavy guns from Chapultepec, and nearly six thousand muskets from the enemy's entrenchments, mowed them down in hundreds. The first discharge covered the ground with dead and dying. One half of the command at least fell with this terrible cataract of bullets; the others, retiring for a moment, took shelter behind some magney, or, in fact, anything that would lend a momentary protection.

"The Light Battalion and the 11th Infantry now came to their relief, and springing forward amid the clouds of smoke and deadly fire, the enemy's works were soon in our possession. At the same time the right and left wing had become hotly engaged with the left and right of the enemy. Garland's brigade, with Duncan's battery, after driving out a large body

of infantry, occupied the mills, while the command of Colonel Mackintosh attacked the Casa Mata.

"This building proved to be a strong work, with deep ditches and entrenchments. The brigade moved rapidly forward to assault it, but on reaching the wide ditch the tremendous fire of muskets to which they were exposed, as well as the heavy guns from the Castle, obliged them to fall back upon their own battery.

"Duncan now opened his batteries upon this building, and with such effect that the enemy soon retreated from it, leaving it unoccupied.

"At this time the remaining brigade of Pillow's division, as well as that of Twiggs', came on the ground, but they were too late. The enemy had already fallen back, and Molino del Rey and the Casa Mata were in possession of the American troops. The latter was shortly after blown up, and all the implements in the foundry, with the cannon moulds, having been destroyed, our army was ordered to return to Tacubaya.

"Thus ended one of the most bloody and fruitless engagements ever fought by the American army. Six hundred and fifty of our brave troops were either killed or wounded, while the loss of the enemy did not amount to more than half this number.

"The fatal action at Molino del Rey cast a gloom over the whole army. Nothing had been gained. The victorious troops fell back to their former positions, and the vanquished assumed a bolder front, celebrating the action as a victory. The Mexican commander gave out that the attack was intended for Chapultepec, and *had consequently* failed. This,

among his soldiers, received credence and doubled their confidence; we, on the other hand, called it a victory on our side. Another such victory, and the American army would never have left the Valley of Mexico.

"On the night of the 11th of September, at midnight, two small parties of men were seen to go out from the village of Tacubaya, moving silently along different roads. One party directed itself along an old road toward Molino del Rey, and about half-way between the village and this latter point halted. The other moved a short distance along the direct road to Chapultepec and halted in like manner. They did not halt to sleep; all night long these men were busy piling up earth, filling sand-bags, and laying the platforms of a gun battery.

"When day broke, these batteries were finished, their guns in position, and, much to the astonishment of the Mexican troops, a merry fire was opened upon the Castle. This fire was soon answered, but with little effect. By ten o'clock another battery from Molino del Rey, with some well-directed shots from a howitzer at the same point, seemed to annoy the garrison exceedingly.

"A belt of woods lies between the Castle and Molino del Rey on the south. A stone wall surrounds these woods. Well-garrisoned, Chapultepec would be impregnable. The belief is that 1,000 Americans could hold it against all Mexico. They might starve them out, or choke them with thirst, but they could not drive them out of it. There are but few fortresses in the world so strong in natural *advantages.*

"During the whole of the 12th the shot from the American batteries kept playing upon the walls of the Castle, answered by the guns of the fortress, and an incessant fire of musketry was kept up by the skirmishing party in the woods of Molino del Rey. Towards evening the Castle began to assume a battered and beleaguered appearance. Shot and shell had made ruin on every point, and several of the enemy's guns were dismounted.

"To enumerate the feats of artillerists on this day would fill a volume. A twenty-pound shot from a battery commanded by Captain Huger and Lieutenant Hagney entered the muzzle of one of the enemy's howitzers and burst the piece. It was not a chance shot. This battery was placed on the old road between Tacubaya and Molino del Rey. The gate of the Castle fronts this way, and the Calzada, or winding road from the Castle to the foot of the hill, was exposed to the fire. As the ground lying to the north and east of Chapultepec was still in possession of the enemy, a constant intercourse was kept up with the Castle by this Calzada.

"On the morning of the 11th, however, when Huger's and Hagney's battery opened, the Calzada became a dangerous thoroughfare. The latter officer found that his shot thrown on the face of the road ricochetted upon the walls with terrible effect, and consequently most of his shots were aimed at this point. It was amusing to see the Mexican officers, who wished to enter or go out of the Castle, wait until Hagney's guns were discharged, and then gallop over the Calzada as if the devil were after them.

"A Mexican soldier at the principal gate was packing a mule with ordnance. 'Can you hit that fellow?' Hagney was asked.

"'I'll try,' was the quiet and laconic reply.

"The long gun was pointed and levelled. At this moment the soldier stooped by the side of the mule in the act of tightening the girth.

"'Fire!' said Hagney, and almost simultaneous with the shot a cloud of dust rose over the causeway. When this cleared away the mule was seen running wild along the Calzada, while the soldier lay dead by the wall.

"On the day when Chapultepec was stormed, September 13, 1847, I was in command of the Grenadier Company of 2nd New York Volunteers, my own, and a detachment of United States Marines acting with us as light infantry, my orders being to stay by and guard the battery we had built on the south-eastern side of the Castle during the night of the 11th. It was about a thousand yards from, and directly in front of, the Castle's main gate, through which our shots went crashing all the day. The first assault had been fixed for the morning of the 13th, a storming party of 500 men, or 'forlorn hope,' as it was called, having volunteered for this dangerous duty. These were of all arms of the service, a captain of regular infantry having charge of them, with a lieutenant of Pennsylvanian Volunteers as his second in command.

"At an early hour the three divisions of our army, Worth's, Pillow's, and Quitman's, closed in upon Chapultepec, our skirmishers driving the enemy's *outposts* before them; some of these retreating up

the hill and into the Castle, others passing around it and on towards the city.

"It was now expected that our storming party would do the work assigned to it, and for which it had volunteered. Standing by our battery, at this time necessarily silent, with the artillery and engineer officers who had charge of it, Captain Huger and Lieutenant Hagney, we three watched the advance of the attacking line, the puffs of smoke from musketry and rifles indicating the exact point to which it had reached. Anxiously we watched it. I need not say nor add that our anxiety became apprehension when we saw that about half-way up the slope there was a halt, something impeding its forward movement. I knew that if Chapultepec was not taken neither would the city be, and failing this, not a man of us might ever leave the Valley of Mexico alive.

"Worth's injudicious attempt upon the entrenchments of Molino del Rey—to call it by no harsher name—our first retreat during the campaign, had greatly demoralised our men, while reversely affecting the Mexicans, inspiring them with a courage they had never felt before. And there were thirty thousand of these to our 6,000—five to one—to say nothing of a host of *rancheros* in the country around and *leperos* in the city, all exasperated against us, the invaders. We had become aware, moreover, that Alvarez, with his spotted Indians (*pintos*), had swung round in our rear and held the mountain pass behind us, so that retreat upon Puebla would have been impossible. This was not my belief alone, but that of every intelligent officer in the army; the two who

stood beside me feeling sure of it as myself. This certainty, combined with the slow progress of the attacking party, determined me to participate in the assault. As the senior engineer officer outranked me, it was necessary I should have his leave to forsake the battery, now needing no further defence, a leave freely and instantly given, with the words, 'Go, and God be with you!'

"The Mexican flag was still waving triumphantly over the Castle, and the line of smoke-puffs had not got an inch nearer it; nor was there much change in the situation when, after a quick run across the intervening ground with my following of volunteers and marines, we came up with the storming party at halt, and irregularly aligned along the base of the hill. For what reason they were staying there we knew not at the time, but I afterwards heard it was some trouble about scaling ladders. I did not pause then to inquire, but, breaking through their line with my brave followers, pushed on up the slope. Near the summit I found a scattered crowd of soldiers, some of them in the grey uniform of the Voltigeur Regiment, others, 9th, 14th, and 15th Infantry. They were the skirmishers, who had thus far cleared the way for us, and far ahead of the 'forlorn hope.' But beyond lay the real area of danger, a slightly sloping ground, some forty yards in width, between us and the Castle's outward wall—in short, the glacis. It was commanded by three pieces of cannon on the parapet, which swept it with grape and canister as fast as they could be loaded and fired. There seemed no chance to advance farther without meeting cer*tain death.* But it would be death all the same

if we did not — such was my thought at that moment.

"Just as I reached this point there was a momentary halt, which made it possible to be heard; and the words I then spoke, or rather shouted, are remembered by me as though it were but yesterday:

"'Men, if we don't take Chapultepec, the American army is lost! Let us charge up to the walls.'

"A voice answered: 'We'll charge if anyone leads us.'

"Another adding: 'Yes, we're ready!'

"At that instant the three guns on the parapet belched forth their deadly showers almost simultaneously. My heart bounded with joy at hearing them go off thus together. It was our opportunity, and, quickly comprehending it, I leaped over the scarp which had sheltered us, calling out:

"'Come on; I'll lead you!'

"It did not need looking back to know that I was followed. The men I had appealed to were not the men to stay behind, else they would not have been there, and all came after.

"When about half-way across the open ground, I saw the parapet crowded with Mexican artillerists in uniforms of dark blue with crimson facings, each musket in hand, and all aiming, as I believed, at my own person. On account of a crimson silk sash I was wearing, they no doubt fancied me a general at least. The volley was almost as one sound, and I avoided it by throwing myself flat along the earth, only getting touched on one of the fingers of my sword-hand, another shot passing through the loose cloth of my overalls. Instantly on my feet again, I

made for the wall, which I was scaling when a bullet from an escopette went tearing through my thigh, and I fell into the ditch."

. . . . . .

Even as he lay wounded in the ditch, Mayne Reid painfully raised himself on one elbow, and was heard shouting to his men:

"For God's sake, men, don't leave that wall!"

The second man up to the walls of the Castle was Corporal Haup, a Swiss, who fell, shot through the head, across the body of Mayne Reid, covering the latter with his blood. The poor fellow managed to roll himself off, saying at the same time, "I'm not hurt so badly as you." But he was dead long before his fallen leader was carried off the field.

As stated by the historian, in referring to this memorable assault, "the national colours of the New York Regiment, the first on the fortress, were displayed by Lieutenant Reid."[1]

It was Mayne Reid's lieutenant, Hypolite Dardonville, a brave young Frenchman, who scaled the walls and raised the first American flag that ever floated over this grand old Castle. Years afterwards, on the death of this gallant Frenchman, Mayne Reid thus closed a beautiful tribute to his memory:

"Hypolite Dardonville! if thy spirit live, and look back to what is passing on earth, it will hear one

[1] "History of the War between the United States and *Mexico*," Jenkins, 1848, pp. 416, 417.

voice speaking of thy valour, and know one heart that reveres thy virtue."[1]

. . . . . .

Mayne Reid concludes his account as follows:—

"Only a few scattered shots were fired after this. The scaling ladders came up, and some scores of men went swarming over the parapet, and Chapultepec was taken.[2]

"The contest was not yet over. The advantage must be followed up, and the city entered. Worth's division, obliquing to the right, followed the enemy on the Tacubaya Road, and through the gate of San Cosme; while the volunteers, with the rifle and one or two other regiments, detached from the division of General Twiggs, were led along the aqueduct towards the citadel and the gate of Belen. Inch by inch did these gallant fellows drive back their opponents; and he who led them, the veteran Quitman, was ever foremost in the fight.

"A very storm of bullets rained along this road, and hundreds of brave men fell to rise no more; but when night closed, the gates of Belen and San Cosme were in possession of the Americans.

"During the still hours of midnight the Mexican

[1] *Onward Magazine*, 1870.

[2] Hanging midway up the stairway to the Senate gallery, at the National Capital, Washington, D.C., is a large and magnificent painting representing "The Storming of Chapultepec," by James Walker. The artist was an American resident of the city of Mexico, and was present at the battle which he so graphically transferred to canvas. The painting was purchased at a cost of $6,000.

army, to the number of some 20,000, stole out of the city and took the road for Guadalupe.

"Next morning at daybreak the remnant of the American army, in all less than 3,000 men, entered the city without further opposition, and formed up in the Grand Plaza. Ere sunrise the American star-spangled banner floated proudly over the Palace of Montezuma, and proclaimed that the city of the Aztecs was in possession of the Americans.

"Chapultepec was in reality the key to the city. If the former was not captured, the latter in all probability would not have been taken at that time, or by that army.

"The city of Mexico stands on a perfectly level plain, where water is reached by digging but a few inches below the surface; this everywhere around its walls, and for miles on every side.

"It does not seem to have occurred to military engineers that a position of this kind is the strongest in the world; the most difficult to assault and easiest to defend. It only needs to clear the surrounding *terrain* of houses, trees, or aught that might give shelter to the besiegers, and obstruct the fire of the besieged. As in the wet ground trenching is impossible, there is no other way of approach. Even a charge by cavalry going at full gallop must fail; they would be decimated, or utterly destroyed, long before arriving at the entrenched line.

"These were the exact conditions under which Mexico had to be assaulted by the American army. There were no houses outside the city walls, no cover of any kind, save rows of tall poplar trees lining *the sides* of the outgoing roads, and most of these had

been cut down. How, then, was the place to be stormed, or rather approached within storming distance?

"The eyes of some skilled American engineers rested upon the two aqueducts running from Chapultepec into the suburbs of the city. Their mason work, with its massive piers and open arches between, promised the necessary cover for skirmishers, to be supported by close following battalions.

"And they did afford this very shelter, enabling the American army to capture the city of Mexico. But to get at the aqueducts, Chapultepec needed to be first taken, otherwise the besiegers would have had the enemy both in front and rear. Hence the desperate and determined struggle at the taking of the Castle, and the importance of its succeeding. Had it failed, I have no hesitation in giving my opinion that no American who fought that day in the Valley of Mexico would ever have left it alive. Scott's army was already weakened by the previous engagements, too much so, to hold itself three days on the defensive. Retreat would have been not disastrous, but absolutely impossible. The position was far worse than that of Lord Sale in the celebrated Cabool expedition. All the passes leading out of the valley by which the Americans might have attempted escape were closed by columns of cavalry. The Indian general, Alvarez, with his hosts of spotted horsemen, the Pintos of the Acapulco region, had occupied the main road by Rio Frio the moment after the Americans marched in. No wonder these fought on that day as for very life. Every intelligent soldier among them knew that in their attack upon

Chapultepec there were but two alternatives: success and life, or defeat and death."

. . . . . .

Mayne Reid and the detachment of brave men who followed him to the walls of the Castle received particular mention in the official despatches of the commander-in-chief and other officers; and "upon good and sufficient recommendations," the gallant leader was promoted to a first lieutenancy.

Extracts from two official despatches are subjoined. Major-General J. A. Quitman thus testifies, under date of September 29, 1874:—

"Two detachments from my command not heretofore mentioned in this report should be noticed. Captain Gallagher and Lieutenant Reid, who, with their companies of New York Volunteers, had been detailed on the morning of the 12th, by General Shields, to the support of our battery, No. 2, well performed the service. The former, by the orders of Captain Huger, was detained at that battery during the storming of Chapultepec. The latter, a brave and energetic young officer, being relieved from the battery on the advance to the Castle, hastened to the assault, and was among the first to ascend the crest of the hill, where he was severely wounded. . . . The gallant New York Regiment claims for their standard the honour of being the first waved from the battlements of Chapultepec."

And the following, from Brigadier-General Shields, dated September 25:—

"The New York flag and Co. B of that regiment, under command of a gallant young officer, Lieutenant Reid, were among the first to mount the ramparts of the Castle, and then display the stars and stripes to the admiration of the army."

For further and more detailed testimony regarding the brave conduct of Mayne Reid in the Mexican war, see Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER VII

Languishes in a Hospital—Mourned as Dead—Recovery—Challenges an Officer to fight a Duel—Explores the Country—"Sketches of a Skirmisher" continued—Extract of Letter to his Father.

AFTER the capture of Chapultepec, Mayne Reid was discovered lying in a ditch near the walls of the Castle. He was immediately transferred to the care of the army surgeons, and later, after the capture of the city of Mexico, occupied comfortable quarters in a hospital in that city. Here he was confined many long weeks.

It was at first supposed that the injured leg would have to be amputated, but the surgeons finally decided that the patient could not survive the operation, as the bullet had only just escaped severing an important artery.

It was reported in the United States that Lieutenant Reid had died of his wounds. This intelligence also reached his family in Ireland, who, with others, mourned his loss until the joyful contradiction arrived. It may prove interesting, as evidence of *Mayne Reid's* early reputation in the United States,

and the esteem in which he was held, to give a few quotations from newspapers and other sources of the period. The following is from the Newport, R.I., *News* :—

"THE LAMENTED LIEUT. REID.

"Lieutenant Reid has been in this country some five or six years, and during that time has been mostly connected with the press, either as an associate, editor, or correspondent; in this last capacity he passed the summer of 1846 in Newport, R.I., engaged in writing letters to the *New York Herald* under the signature of 'Ecolier.' It was at this time that we became acquainted with him, and there are many others in the community who will join us in bearing testimony to his worth as a man, all of whom will be grieved at the announcement of his death. He returned to New York about the first of September, and shortly after sailed for Mexico with his regiment. He was at the battle of Monterey, and distinguished himself in that bloody affair. We published a little poem from his pen, entitled 'Monterey,' about three months ago, which will undoubtedly be remembered by our readers. Towards the close of the poem was this stanza:

"'We were not many—we who pressed
Beside the brave who fell that day;
But who of us has not confessed
He'd rather share their warrior rest,
Than not have been at Monterey?'

"Alas for human glory! The departed probably

little thought at the time he penned the above lines that he would be sharing 'their warrior rest.' At the storming of Chapultepec he was severely wounded, and died soon after from his wounds. He was a man of singular talents, and gave much promise as a writer. His temperament was exceedingly nervous, and his fancy brilliant. His best productions may be found in *Godey's Book*, about three or four years ago, under the signature of 'Poor Scholar.' It is mournful that talents like his should be so early sacrificed, and that his career should be so soon closed, far—very far—from the land of his birth and the bosom of his home, as well as the land of his adoption. But thus it is! . . ."

The poem referred to above, which first appeared in *Godey's Magazine*, is given in full below:—

"MONTEREY.

"We were not many—we who stood
Before the iron sleet that day—
Yet many a gallant spirit would
Give half his years if he but could
Have been with us at Monterey.

"Now here, now there, the shot it hailed
In deadly drifts of fiery spray,
Yet not a single soldier quailed
When wounded comrades round them wailed
Their dying shouts at Monterey.

"And on—still on our columns kept,
Through walls of flame, its withering way;
Where fell the dead, the living stept,
Still charging on the guns which swept
The slippery streets of Monterey.

"The foe himself recoiled aghast,
When, striking where he strongest lay,
We swooped his flanking batteries past,
And, braving full their murderous blast,
Stormed home the towers of Monterey.

"Our banners on those turrets wave,
And there our evening bugles play;
Where orange boughs above their grave
Keep green the memory of the brave
Who fought and fell at Monterey.

"We were not many—we who pressed
Beside the brave who fell that day;
But who of us has not confessed
He'd rather share their warrior rest,
Than not have been at Monterey?"

At a public dinner given in the city of Columbus, Ohio, to celebrate the capture of Mexico, Lieutenant Mayne Reid's memory was toasted, and the following dirge, written by a young poetess, was recited with great effect:—

"Gone—gone—gone!
Gone to his dreamless sleep!
And spirits of the brave,
Watching o'er his lone grave,
Weep—weep—weep!

. . . . .

"Mourn—mourn—mourn!
Mother, to sorrow long wed!
Far o'er the mighty deep,
Where the brave coldly sleep,
Thy warrior son lies dead.

"Lone—lone—lone!
In thine own far island home!
Ere thy life's task is done,
Oft with the setting sun,
O'er the sea thy thoughts will roam.

. . . . .

"Sound—sound—sound
The trumpet, while thousands die!
Madly forcing his way,
Through the blood-dashing spray,
He beareth our banner on high!

"Woe—woe—woe!
Like a thought he has sunk to rest:
Slow they bear him away,
In stern martial array,
The flag and the sword on his breast.

"High—high—high!
High in the temple of fame!
The poet's fadeless wreath,
And the soldier's sheath,
Are engraven above his name.

"Long—long—long!
As time to the earth shall belong!
The sad wind o'er the surge
Shall chant its low dirge
To this peerless child of song.

"Gone—gone—gone!
Gone to his dreamless sleep!
And spirits of the brave,
Watching o'er his lone grave,
Weep—weep—weep!"

The author of the above lines was personally *unacquainted* with Mayne Reid, having heard of him

only through mutual friends and the newspapers.

It is not given to every man to read obituary notices of himself, but this happened to Mayne Reid more than once during his life. So marvellous, indeed, were his recoveries from the brink of death, that his friends regarded him as bearing a "charmed life."

Two or three weeks after the announcement of his death, the *New York Herald* published the following contradiction of the report :—

"Through misinformation, it was currently reported that Lieutenant Mayne Reid, whose gallant behaviour at the battle of Chapultepec called forth a merited compliment from General Scott in one of his late despatches, had died of his wounds. We are informed by one of our returned officers that although severely wounded by an escopette ball in the left leg above the knee, he has since recovered, and intends to remain. Of course he will be promoted."

The New York *Spirit of the Times*, of December 11, 1847, contained the following :—

"Lieutenant Mayne Reid, of the New York Regiment, who was severely wounded in the attack on Chapultepec, and subsequently reported dead, writes us under date of October 28, from the city of Mexico, that though 'a bullet, about as large as a pigeon's egg (from an escopette), passed through the thick part of his thigh, playing the very deuce with it,' yet that he is considered out of danger. He is still on

his back, though. Last week we published an obituary notice of this fine young officer, who has long been a favourite correspondent of this paper. We heartily congratulate him on his escape."

The *National Gazette*, of Philadelphia, after referring to the wounds received by Mayne Reid, said:

"For several years he resided in Philadelphia. While in this city he won for himself many friends, as well as a high literary reputation."

In March, 1848, the Pittsburg *Daily Dispatch* contained the following interesting bit of gossip:—

"Lieutenant Mayne Reid, whose death was reported some time since, is about to be married to Signorina Gaudaloupe Rozas, a beautiful lady, daughter of Senator Rozas, and said to be the wealthiest heiress in the Valley of Mexico."

This rumour also reached Mayne Reid's old home. But it was equally untrue, as that of his death. He had not yet "met his fate."

On hearing the report of the death of Lieutenant Reid, his old friend, Mr. A. L. Piatt, of Ohio, addressed the following letter to the army surgeon:—

"MAC-O-CHEE, 1847.

"DEAR SIR,—I address you with pain and regret *on account* of the late intelligence brought us by the

Lieut. Mayne Reid.
(1847.)

Mrs. Mayne Reid.
(1863.)

papers of the severe wound received by Lieut. Reid, and his death. Whilst we look with pride upon the many gallant deeds he performed, it but poorly remunerates us for so severe a loss. And we should receive with sad but infinite pleasure any further account of him whilst wounded. It is with regret that we call upon you to give us this sad intelligence, as it may inconvenience you, but the deep interest we felt for Mr. Reid has tempted us to trouble you with these inquiries, and remain yours respectfully,

"A. L. PIATT."

At last, under skilful treatment, Mayne Reid recovered from the ugly wound he had received. Shortly after his return to health, he was on the eve of engaging in another battle—a duel this time; but the challenged one, through a friend, sent the following note, which smoothed matters over, and prevented an encounter:—

"CITY OF MEXICO, *Dec.* 18, 1847.

"CAPTAIN MAYNE REID,

"SIR,—Captain M'Kinstry has received your note of yesterday, and has requested me, as his friend, to inform you that he has not made any remarks reflecting upon you as a gentleman and a man of honour.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"JOHN B. GRAYSON, Capt. 165 A."

Mayne Reid remained in Mexico several months after his discharge from the hospital, during which time he made a careful study of the country and its people. It is needless to say that its fauna and flora also received much attention. The knowledge thus gained was afterwards used in his "Rifle Rangers" and other romances.

While convalescing, he continued his "Sketches by a Skirmisher," commenced while he was stationed at Vera Cruz, as before mentioned, and published in the New York *Spirit of the Times*. In the issue of that journal for Dec. 11, 1847, a long article was devoted to "The Action of Molino del Rey," and "The Storming of Chapultepec." In the following issue, "The Battle of Churubusco," the "Great Battle of Mexico," and the "Taking of Contreras," were discussed at length, over the signature "Ecolier." Other articles were contributed to the *New York Herald* and the Newport, R.I., *News*.

The gallant Captain was equally distinguished in love and in war, and by some fair Mexicans he was called "Don Juan Tenorio," a character which appears in one of their most famous plays. An American journalist described the gallant officer as a "mixture of Adonis and the Apollo Belvidere, with a dash of the Centaur!"

It was one of Mayne Reid's duties in Mexico to protect the inmates of a convent, and the nuns frequently sent him little delicacies in the shape of

sweetmeats, made by their own fair hands, with his initials in comfits on the top.

It is quite possible that more than one black-eyed senorita watched the final departure of this hero from Mexico with regret and tears.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, save for scattered newspaper reports, Mayne Reid's parents and friends in his far-off island home had heard nothing from him for some years, when the father received the following letter, the latter part of which has unfortunately been torn and lost:—

"U.S. ARMY, CITY OF MEXICO,
"*Jan.* 20, 1848.

"Can I expect that my silence for several years will be pardoned? When I last wrote you, I made a determination that our correspondence, on my side at least, should cease until I had made myself worthy of continuing that correspondence. Since then circumstances have enabled me to take rank among men—to prove myself not unworthy of that gentle blood from which I am sprung. Oh, how my heart beats at the renewal of those tender ties—paternal, fraternal, filial affection; those golden chains of the heart so long, so sadly broken.

"If I mistake not, my last letter to you was written in the city of Pittsburg. I was then on my way from the West to the cities of the Atlantic. Shortly after, I reached Philadelphia, where for a while my wild wanderings ceased. In this city I devoted

myself to literature, and for a period of two or three years earned a scanty but honourable subsistence with my pen. My genius, unfortunately for my purse, was not of that marketable class which prostitutes itself to the low literature of the day. My love for tame literature enabled me to remain poor —aye, even obscure, if you will—though I have the consolation of knowing that there are understandings, and those, too, of a high order, who believe that my capabilities in this field are not surpassed, if equalled, by any writer on this continent. This is the undercurrent of feeling regarding me in the United States; the current, I am happy to say, that runs in the minds of the educated and intelligent. Perhaps in some future day this undercurrent may break through the surface, and shine the brighter for having been so long concealed.

"But I have now neither time nor space for theories. Facts will please you better, my dear father and best friend. During my trials as a writer, my almost anonymous productions occasionally called forth warm eulogies from the press. A little gold rubbed into the palm of an editor would have made them wonders! During this time I made many friends, but none of that class who were able and willing to lift me from the sink of poverty.

"There are no Mæcenases in the United States. I found none to forge golden wings for me, that I might fly to the heights of Parnassus. During this probation, I frequently sent you papers and magazines containing my productions, generally, I believe, under the *nom-de-plume* of 'The Poor *Scholar.*' Have these missiles ever reached you?

As I have said, for three or four years I struggled on through this life of literature, and amid the charlatanism and quackery of the age I found I must descend to the everyday nothings of the daily press. I edited, corresponded, became disgusted. The war broke out with Mexico. I flung down the pen and took up the sword. I entered the regiment of New York Volunteers as a 2nd lieutenant, and sailing—"

The letter was torn here, and the remaining portion had possibly been consumed by the peat fire in Mayne Reid's own home.

CHAPTER VIII

Retires from the Army with the Rank of Captain—Returns to the United States—Resides at Newport and Philadelphia—Accompanies Donn Piatt to Ohio—Donn Piatt's Recollections of Mayne Reid—Goes to New York City—"Who was First at Chapultepec?"—Statement of Mayne Reid—Testimony of Army Officers—Letter to the *Cincinnati Commercial.*

THE evacuation of Mexico was ordered in May, 1848, and in the same month Mayne Reid resigned from the army, retiring with the rank of captain. Not long afterwards he left Mexico for the United States, stopping a few days at New Orleans *en route.*

The summer and autumn of that year were spent mainly at Newport, R.I., and Philadelphia, during which time he wrote for various journals. At the former place he met his friend Donn Piatt, who invited him to pass the winter at his home, near Mac-o-Chee, Ohio, whither the two men went in the latter part of the year. On the arrival of the hero at Newport, Mayne Reid was thus described:—

"We omitted yesterday to notice the arrival in

our midst of this chivalric young soldier, fresh from the field of glory in Mexico. He had been reported killed once or twice, and also wedded to a Mexican heiress. He looks, however, as if *neither* of these evils had approached him, and a finer or more gallant figure and countenance are not to be seen any day in our streets."

The following extract from an article entitled "Memories of Eminent Authors," by Donn Piatt, is of interest at this point:—

"Mayne Reid wrote his first romance at my house, where he spent a winter. He had come out of the Mexican War decorated with an ugly wound, and covered with glory as the bravest of the brave in our little army under Scott.

"When not making love to the fair girls of the Mac-o-Chee, or dashing over the country on my mare, he was writing a romance with the scene in Mexico and on our Mexican border. He would read chapters to us of an evening (he was a fine reader), and if the commendation did not come up to his self-appreciation he would go to bed in a huff, and, not touching pen to paper for days, would make my mare suffer in his wild rides. I found that to save bay Jenny I must praise his work, and he came to regard me in time as Byron did Gifford. When told that that ugly critic had pronounced 'me lord' the greatest of living poets, Byron said that he was 'a damned discriminating fellow.'

"That romance ('The Rifle Rangers') proved a great success. Again, like Byron, he put on his well-worn gown, one morning, and woke to fame and and fortune.

"The first remittance for literary work took the restless soldier of fortune from us, never to return. He would not have been content to remain as long as he did, but for the fact that he was desperately in love with a fair inmate of our house. But in her big blue eyes the gallant Irishman did not find favour, and he at last gave up the pursuit.

"From the station where he awaited his train he wrote us two letters. One of these I never saw. The other contained the following lines, which, without possessing any remarkable poetic merit, gracefully put on record his kind feelings on parting from the house he had made his home for nearly a year:—

"'Fade from my sight the valley deep,
The brown old mossy mill,
The willows, where the wild birds keep
Song-watch beside the rill;
The cottage, with its rustic porch,
Where the latest flower blooms,
And autumn, with her flaming torch,
The dying year illumes.

"'Within mine ears the sad farewell
In music lingers yet,
And casts upon my soul a spell
That bids it not forget;
Forget, dear friends, I never may,
While yet there lives a strain,
A flower, a thought, a favoured lay
To call you back again.

"'When evening comes you fondly meet
About the firelit hearth,
And hours fly by on wingèd feet,
In music and in mirth;
Ah! give a thought to one whose fate
On thorny pathway lies,
Who lingered fondly near the gate
That hid his paradise.

"'I hear, along the ringing rails,
My fate, that comes apace,
A moment more and strife prevails,
Where once were peace and rest;
Unrest begins, my furlough ends,
The world breaks on my view,
Ah! peaceful scene; ah! loving friends,
A sad and last adieu.'

"Between that parting and our next encounter some twenty years intervened. Mayne Reid had made his fame and fortune, throwing away the latter upon a Mexican ranche in England, and I, yet floating about on spars, had just begun to use my pen as a means of support. He was grey, stout and rosy, living with his handsome little wife in rooms at Union Square, New York. I told him that the old homestead upon the Mac-o-Chee had fallen into decay, and of the little family circle he so fondly remembered I alone remained. That made him so sad that I proposed a bottle of wine to alleviate our sorrow, and he led the way to a subterranean excavation in Broadway, where we had not only the bottle, but a dinner and several bottles."

. . . . . .

Mayne Reid returned to the east in the spring of 1849. On his arrival in New York City, the question

"Who was first at Chapultepec?" was being discussed by army officers and others, in the newspapers and elsewhere. Mayne Reid at once became an interested participant in the discussion, as indicated by the following extract from a letter written by him several years later, and the documents which accompanied it:—

"These documents were hastily collected in New York in the spring of 1849, when I heard of other individuals claiming to have been first into Chapultepec. I do not claim to have been first over the walls, as I did not get over the wall at all, but was shot down in front of it; but I claim to have led up the men who received the last volley of the enemy's fire, and thus left the scaling of the wall a mere matter of climbing, as scarcely anyone was shot afterwards.

"While collecting this testimony, I was suddenly called upon to take the leadership of a legion organised in New York to assist the revolutionary struggle in Europe, and I sailed at the latter end of June, 1849. Otherwise I could have obtained far more testimony than is contained in these scant documents here.

"MAYNE REID.

"P.S.—General Pillow was at the time using every exertion to disprove my claims, it being a life-and-death matter with him, having an eye to the Presidency, to prove that the men in his division were the first to enter Chapultepec."

The testimony referred to above (which Mayne

Reid says was generously given, as only one of these officers was my personal friend, the others being almost unknown to me) is as follows:—

TESTIMONY OF LIEUTENANT COCHRANE, 2ND REGIMENT VOLTIGEURS.

"On the morning of the 13th of September, 1847, the regiment of Voltigeurs, to which I was attached as subaltern officer, was ordered to clear the woods and the western side of the wall, extending from Molino del Rey to the Castle of Chapultepec, of the Mexican Infantry (light), and to halt at the foot of the hill, in order to allow the storming party of Worth's division to scale the hill.

"We drove the Mexicans as ordered, but in so rapid a manner that, along with some of the infantry of the 14th, 15th, and 9th of Pillow's division, we kept driving the enemy under a heavy fire from the Castle, and a redan on the side of the hill, clear into their works, the storming party coming up rapidly.

"After driving from the redan, I pushed for the south-western corner of the Castle with all the men about me, and scarcely ten yards from the wall an officer of infantry, and either an officer or sergeant of artillery—judging from the stripe on his pants—were shot, and fell. They were the only two at the time that I saw in advance of me along the narrow path, over the rock of which we were scrambling. On collecting under the wall of the Castle, there were some thirty or forty of us infantry and Voltigeurs at

the extreme corner of the Castle, and several other officers were there at the same point. The main body had halted at the scarp of the hill, some forty yards from the wall, awaiting the arrival of the scaling ladders before making the final and decisive assault.

"I ordered two men of the Voltigeurs to go back a little way and assist the ladders up the hill. As they proceeded to do so they passed the point where the infantry officer above alluded to lay wounded, who, with evident pain, raised himself and sang out above the din and rattle of musketry:

"'For God's sake, men, don't leave that wall, or we shall all be cut to pieces. Hold on, and the Castle is ours!' or words to that effect.

"I immediately answered from the wall: 'There is no danger, Captain, of our leaving this. Never fear!' or words to that amount. Shortly after, the ladders came, the rush was made, and the Castle fell.

"In the course of a casual conversation about the events of that memorable morning, while in the city of Mexico, this incident was mentioned, and the officer who was wounded proved to be Lieutenant Mayne Reid, of the New York Volunteers, who had been ordered to guard the battering guns upon the plain, and had joined the party in the assault on the Molino del Rey side of the Castle.

"I spoke freely of this matter, and was quite solicitous to become acquainted, while in Mexico, with the gallant and chivalric officer in question. This is a hasty and imperfect sketch of this trans*action.* I heard that Lieutenant Reid had made a

speech to the men of all arms, which had induced them to ascend; but as a party were fiercely engaged at the redan for a few seconds, I could not have heard his remarks above the din, as I was one of the redan party. It may be possible that the above speech is the one alluded to, though from what I heard said of it, he must have made other remarks at an earlier moment.

"Of course, I have not given the exact words, as some eighteen months have elapsed since that never-to-be-forgotten day, but I have given the *fact* and the substance of the words, which shows far more—the *fact*, I mean—credit and honour to his courage and his gallant conduct than the mere words could.

"THEO. D. COCHRANE,
"Late Second Lieut., Regt. Voltigeurs.

"COLUMBIA, PA., *May* 20, 1849."

TESTIMONY OF CHARLES PETERNELL, CAPTAIN OF FIFTEENTH INFANTRY.

"CLEVELAND, OHIO, *June*, 1849.

"CAPTAIN MAYNE REID,

"DEAR SIR,—I will testify to what I have seen of your military bravery and valour at Chapultepec—the only place where I have personally observed your gallant conduct.

"When our regiment—Fifteenth Infantry—had charged through the trees on the foot of the Chapultepec Hill, and after our skirmishers had taken the first redan, and chased the Mexicans out

of it, I saw a young officer on my right hand side collecting about forty men of different corps, and encouraging the same with an address, which the roaring of the cannon and the musketry hindered me from understanding. Shortly after, I saw the little band of heroes, with their brave leader in front, charge the right side battery, where a howitzer was posted; and they tried very hard to climb the mud walls, which were about twenty feet high. Soon after I perceived through the dense smoke caused by the last discharge of the battery towards the small command that the officer had scaled the wall and fell—what I then took for dead.

"All this was done in half the time I take to write it, and I was too much occupied with the command of my own detachment to enter into more particulars of that deciding moment. My earnest admiration was paid to the dead hero; and onward we went to the left corner of the fortification. How we entered the Castle, and what great excitement prevailed in the first half hour of that glorious victory is too well known for further description. But one thing I must add: that my first inquiry after the abating of the excitement was, 'Who was that young officer leading the charge on our right?' and one of my men gave me the answer: 'It is a New Yorker by the name of Mayne Reid, a hell of a fellow.'

"That name I had heard several times before very favourably mentioned, without being personally acquainted with the man; and just as I was going to see if he was really dead, or wounded, General Cadwallader addressed the troops from the window *of the* Castle, and gave orders to rally the different

companies and be prepared for further orders. I had to stay with my company, of course, and could not satisfy my great desire to ascertain the fate of that brave young man.

"One thing more I wish to say, namely, that this same brave conduct of yours helped on the left a great deal, because it turned the fire of the infantry in our front, and gave us time to storm the walls at the right moment.

"Yours most respectfully,

"CHARLES PETERNELL,
"Captain, Fifteenth Infantry."

The following statement was made, under affidavit, by Lieutenant Edward C. Marshall, of the 15th Infantry, and forwarded to Donn Piatt:—

"I was in command of our company ordered to the attack of Chapultepec (Captain King being indisposed), and had approached, under cover of trees and rocks, to the brow of the hill upon which the Castle stands, where we halted to await the coming of the ladders. At this point the fire from the Castle was so continuous and fatal that the men faltered, and several officers were wounded while urging them on. At this moment I noticed Lieutenant Reid, of the New York Volunteers. I noticed him more particularly at the time on account of the very brilliant uniform he wore.

"He suddenly jumped to his feet, calling upon those around to follow, and without looking back to see whether he was sustained or not, pushed on almost alone to the very walls, where he fell badly

wounded; all the officers who saw or knew of the act pronounced it, without exception, the bravest and most brilliant achievement performed by a single individual during the campaign, and at the time we determined, should occasion ever require it, to do him justice. I am satisfied that his daring was the cause of our taking the Castle as we did. Nor was it an act of blind courage, but one of cool self-possession in the midst of imminent danger. Lieutenant Reid had observed from the sound that the Castle was poorly supplied with side guns, and knew that, could he once get his men to charge up to the walls, they would be upon almost equal footing with the defenders. What makes this achievement more remarkable, Lieutenant Reid was not ordered to attack, but volunteered."

Letters to the same effect were also received from Captain J. D. Sutherland, of the United States Marines, and Captain D. Upham, of the United States Infantry.

This testimony clearly established the gallant conduct of Mayne Reid, and entitled him to the credit of being first to reach the walls of Chapultepec in the midst of the enemy's leaden rain. His bravery was all the more praiseworthy in view of his having asked permission of a superior officer to make the assault.

Another gallant act of Mayne Reid's was jealously questioned while he was in New York in June, 1849. *As the* reader already knows, the last charge by

American infantry at the battle of Churubusco, was made by the Grenadier Company of New York Volunteers, under the leadership of Mayne Reid. This was denied by an officer of the Palmetto Regiment, South Carolina, who evidently had a desire to appropriate the honour for his own regiment.

Soon after the denial, and on the eve of his departure from America, Mayne Reid secured the sworn affidavits of five members of the New York Volunteers, whose testimony proved that the honour of leading the last charge at the above-mentioned battle, in which the enemy were completely routed, was due to Mayne Reid. These documents, accompanied by a letter of explanation from Mayne Reid, were published in the *New York Herald*, June 28, 1849. The following is an extract from the letter :—

"I part for a while from the land I have so strangely loved—from the land I still love. I leave it with a thousand regrets. But a just cause tempts me, and I would be proud to see once more the blades of the brave Palmettoes glisten beside me in the fight for freedom, confident that there all jealousy would end, as when many of their number rushed out and grasped my hand after the final charge at Churubusco."

Before the readers of the *Herald* saw the letter the writer was speeding across the ocean on an

errand of which the reader will learn in the following chapter. Nineteen years elapsed before Mayne Reid again set foot in the United States.

. . . . . .

We close this chapter with an interesting letter written by Mayne Reid, in reply to an article by a Washington correspondent of the *Cincinnati Commercial*, which had appeared in the issue of October 22, 1882. The reply was dated, "Ross, Herefordshire, England, December 1, 1882," and was published in the same paper on the 22nd of the latter month.

Mayne Reid says:—

"SIR,—My attention has been called to a letter which lately appeared in some American newspapers, headed, 'Mayne Reid's Mexican War Experiences,' in which certain statements are made gravely affecting my character and reputation. The writer says that in Puebla, Mexico, 'Lieutenant Reid, while reproving one of the men of his company, became very much heated, and ran his sword through the man's body. The man died the same night.'

"Now, sir, it is quite true that I ran a soldier through with my sword, who soon after died of the wound; but it is absolutely untrue that there was any heat of temper on my part, or other incentive to act, save that of self-defence and the discharge of my

[1] The London correspondent of the *Ohio State Journal* forwarded a copy of the letter to his paper, in which it also appeared.

duty as an officer. On the day of the occurrence I was officer of the guard, and the man a prisoner in the guard prison—where, indeed, he spent most of his time—for he was a noted desperado, and, I may add, robber, long the pest and terror not only of his comrades in the regiment, but the poor Mexican people, who suffered from his depredations, as all who were then there and are still living may remember.

"Having several times escaped from the guard-house prison, he had that day been recaptured, and I entered the cell to see to his being better secured. While the manacles were being placed upon his wrists—long-linked heavy irons—he clutched hold of them, and, rushing at me, aimed a blow at my head, which, but for my being too quick for him, would, if they had struck me, caused serious if not fatal effect. He was a man of immense size and strength, and, as all knew, regardless of consequences. He had been often heard to boast that no officer dare put him in irons, and threaten those who in the line of their duty had to act toward him with severity. Still, when I thrust out, it was with no intention to kill, only to keep him off; and in point of fact, in his mad rush toward me he impaled himself on my sword.

"The writer of the letter goes on to say: 'Lieutenant Reid's grief was uncontrollable. The feeling against him, despite the fact that he had provocation for the act, was very strong in the regiment. . . . If the regiment had not moved with the rest of the army toward Mexico the next day, Lieutenant Reid would have been court-martialed, and might have been shot.'

"In answer to these serious allegations, not made

in any malice, I believe, but from misinformation, I have only to say that I *was* tried by court-martial, and instead of being sentenced to be shot, was ordered to resume command of my company for the forward march upon Mexico. And so far from the feeling being strong against me in the regiment, it was just the reverse, not only in the regiment, but throughout the whole army—the lamented Phil Kearney, commanding the dragoons, with many other officers of high rank, publicly declaring that for what I had done, instead of condemnation I deserved a vote of thanks. This because the army's discipline had become greatly relaxed during the long period of inaction that preceded our advance into the Valley of Mexico, and we had much trouble with the men, especially of the volunteer regiments. My act, involuntary and unintentional though it was, did something toward bringing them back to a sense of obedience and duty. That I sorrowed for it is true, but not in the sense attributed to me by the newspaper correspondent. My grief was from the necessity that forced it upon me, and its lamentable result. It is some satisfaction to know that the unfortunate man himself held me blameless, and in his dying words, as I was told, said I had but done my duty. So I trust that this explanation will place the affair in a different light from that thrown upon it by the article alluded to."

CHAPTER IX

Helps to organise a Legion in New York to aid the European Revolutionists—Sails for Europe—Failure of the Bavarian Insurrection—Visits his Native Home—Returns to London and prepares to aid Kossuth—Sheaths his Sword and takes up the Pen.

DURING the fore part of the year 1849, numerous mass meetings were held in New York City, as elsewhere, for the purpose of sympathising with the revolutionary movement then disturbing Europe. Mayne Reid was an interested participator at many of these demonstrations, and at once made up his mind to aid the revolutionists with all his power.

An opportunity soon presented itself, and Mayne Reid was called upon to take the leadership of a legion organised in New York for the purpose of aiding the European revolutionists in Bavaria and Hungary.

On the 27th of June, 1849, Mayne Reid and the German patriot, Frederick Hecker, with others, sailed from New York in the Royal Mail steamship *Cambria*, Captain Shannon, for Liverpool, on their praiseworthy errand. The men composing the

legion raised in New York were to follow in another steamship.

At the time that Mayne Reid decided to go to the aid of Louis Kossuth, the California gold excitement was at its height. Nearly everyone had the "fever," and thousands were daily leaving New York and other Atlantic cities for the land of gold.

The strength of this excitement and the resulting emigration is recalled by the fact that during the first three months of the year (1849) 110 vessels sailed from the port of New York alone, bound for California. As many as six departed in one day. A total of over 14,000 vessels left the Atlantic sea-ports for the same destination, from December 14, 1848, to April 15, 1849. Nearly all carried passengers.

The adventurous spirit of Mayne Reid was again aroused, and he would have crossed the plains with one of the numerous caravans but for the counter excitement in favour of the far-off strugglers for freedom. Two attractions were thus presented—on the one hand, a fair prospect of golden gains and adventure; on the other "war to the knife," and perhaps death. True to his nature, he unhesitatingly chose the latter alternative, as we have seen.

Just before Mayne Reid left New York, Commodore Moore, of the U.S. Navy, presented him with a fine sword. The weapon bore the following inscription: "Presented to Captain Mayne Reid, by his old *friend*, Commodore E. U. Moore."

Mayne Reid lent this weapon in the year 1861 to his brother-in-law, who had joined the English legion to fight for Garibaldi in Italy. While he was asleep one night on the field, the sword was stolen. It was never recovered or even heard of, to the great regret of its owner.

On the arrival of the *Cambria* at Liverpool, July 10, it was learned that the Bavarian revolution was at an end. The leaders were therefore to proceed direct to Hungary as soon as their men should arrive.

Mayne Reid now took leave of his friend Hecker, after appointing to join him in London in the course of a week or ten days. The former then embarked in the first boat leaving for Warren Point, in the North of Ireland, to visit his native home before engaging in the expedition to aid Kossuth.

He landed on the quay at Warren Point, July 12, and at once inquired for a car to convey him out to his home, a distance of about twenty miles, when an amusing incident occurred. A couple of "Paddies" shouldered his luggage, and were marching off with it.

"Where is the car?" inquired Mayne Reid.

"Shure, your honour, it's close by."

In turning to speak to a fellow-traveller, he had failed to notice in which direction the men had gone. After an impatient wait of fifteen minutes, with no sign of them or the horse and car, Reid was beginning to bless his native land in rather strong language, and about to dispatch a boy in search of them, when he

espied the car approaching round the angle of the road. Instead, however, of a horse, there was a man between the shafts!

Mayne Reid, no little astonished, inquired the meaning of this, and received the following explanation from the horse's substitute:

"Well, your honour, shure the horse has just gone to the smithy to be shod; he'll be here this minit!"

The situation was so ludicrous that, in spite of his impatience to be off, Mayne Reid laughed heartily, and gave three cheers for "Ould Ireland."

Finally the horse arrived, and after a hard struggle —the smithy evidently not having agreed with the animal's temper—he was confined between the shafts, and Mayne Reid once more mounted an Irish car, and was travelling over the well-remembered road, with its enchanting mountain scenery, leading to his old home.

When within a few miles of home, a messenger was sent on ahead to Ballyroney to break the news of his arrival to his family, who were in ignorance of his having left America. Closely following on the heels of his messenger, Mayne Reid soon arrived at the home from which he had been absent for ten years.

We leave the reader to imagine the rejoicings that followed. Mayne Reid had left home a mere youth; he had returned a man who had passed through many fires, and bore their scars upon him. It was *not long* before the neighbours of the surrounding

country assembled in a body to do honour to the hero of Chapultepec, though the rejoicings were saddened by the thought that he must soon depart, and on an errand of war. But, while listening to some of his adventures, this was for the time lost sight of.

He was especially questioned as to his reported marriage to a Mexican heiress, the news of which had reached them. He replied that this was a bit of romance, and that although he greatly admired a moustache on the upper lip of a *young* Spanish beauty, the contemplation of such an adornment on the lip of an *old* one was too much for him ; adding to his mother :

" I believe you would as soon have me dead as married to a papist."

To which his admiring parent replied : " Indeed, I almost think I should."

The time agreed upon with Hecker expired, and Mayne Reid bade adieu to his home and friends, and returned to London, arriving about the beginning of August. He at once threw all his energies into the Hungarian cause.

Shortly after his arrival in London, a public meeting was held at the Hanover Square Rooms to advocate the recognition of Hungary as a nation. Mayne Reid was present, and took part in the proceedings, as follows (copied from the *Illustrated London News*):—

"Colonel Reid, United States, moved the next resolution, and announced himself to be at the head of a band of bold Americans, who had arrived in this metropolis on their way to Hungary, to place their swords and lives at the disposal of her people. The resolution he moved was as follows: 'That the immediate recognition of the Government *de facto* of the kingdom of Hungary by this country, is no less demanded by considerations of justice and policy, and the commercial interests of the two States, than with a view to putting a stop to the effusion of human blood, and of terminating the prospect of the fearful and bloody sepulchre of a soldier. Gentlemen,' he said, 'let us hope that this result may never be—let us pray that it may never be—and before I resume my seat I will offer a prayer to the God of Omnipotence, couched in a paraphrase upon the language of the eloquent Curran: May the Austrian and Russian sink together in the dust; may the brave Magyar walk abroad in his own majesty; may his body swell beyond the measure of his chains, now bursting from around him; and may he stand redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation.'"

But Mayne Reid was not destined to fight in the cause of Hungary, any more than in the Bavarian insurrection. Fate held different purposes for him to fulfil. Before the expedition had started, news came of the defeat at Temsevar, on August 9, 1849. Kossuth had been compelled to abandon his position and flee into Turkey, and the subjugation of Hungary was soon after completed.

As there was now no longer a prospect of war, Mayne Reid's next effort was to help the legion to return to their homes in America. Funds for this purpose were raised by selling a quantity of Colt's revolvers which he had brought over with him.

Mayne Reid now finally sheathed his sword, once more took up the pen, and began those marvellous tales of adventure which have made his name famous.

"We hold Captain Reid to be the very Landseer of living authors. It is obvious that he has seen the localities he describes, and become personally acquainted with their strange denizens; and it is with so healthy and natural a zeal he plunges into scenes of adventure that we are puzzled to tell whether imagination or memory is his guide."—*Chambers's Journal.*

"Captain Mayne Reid's name is familiar as a 'household word.' There are few who do not know his repute as a prince of story-tellers in his own peculiar domain—the wild prairie and boundless forest of the far West. To follow some of the incidents depicted in his pages almost takes away the reader's breath."—*Bristol Mercury.*

"In many respects Mayne Reid may be called the Fenimore Cooper of the San Saba. He enjoys all the gifts of describing scenery, and painting personal character, revealed by the great American novelist. The gallant captain won his spurs in literature, as he did in military distinction, many years ago, and it is but fair to say that he has not dishonoured his ancient renown. In a word, Captain Mayne Reid is a novelist whose works will outlive him."—*Perth Advertiser.*

"His style reminds one of young lions at play, of quickly-beating pulses, of riotous health and sanguine hopes, of susceptibilities that make commonplace things romantic, of loving without rhyme or reason, of defying danger and daring death. Some of his pictures are magnificent, without the slightest exaggeration."—*Weekly Despatch.*

"Captain Reid is a writer *sui generis*, and, now that Cooper is no more, he stands without a rival."—*Morning Post.*

"We pronounce with earnestness that we think it almost next to impossible to find amongst recent literary productions any one that contains more spirit-stirring details of daring adventure, mixed with lighter and perhaps more pleasing recital of other events, than the 'Rifle Rangers.'"—*Bell's Life.*

CHAPTER X

His First Romance—Commences his Juvenile Tales—Organises a Rifle Club—The "Boy Hunters" and the "Young Voyageurs"—Opinions of his Works—Friendship of Mayne Reid and Louis Kossuth—Defence of Kossuth—Correspondence—Crimean War Speech—Some Idea of entering a Political Career.

BEFORE Mayne Reid left the United States he had endeavoured to find a publisher for his first romance, the "Rifle Rangers," which had been written at the house of his friend, Donn Piatt, in Ohio. His efforts were unsuccessful, however; or at least such offers as he received were unsatisfactory; and the manuscript therefore accompanied him to Europe.

With no prospect of fighting on his hands, Mayne Reid now sought a publisher for his novel, after revising it somewhat. In this he was soon successful, the work being brought out in the spring of 1850 by William Shoberl, London. It was published in three volumes at one guinea, on an agreement to pay the author one-half of the profits. The work proved a great success from its first appearance, receiving the most flattering reception from press and public.

The author tells us in the preface to this book that "the incidents are not fictitious," and that "the characters are taken from living originals." It teems with varied Mexican adventures and life-like descriptions of manners and scenery. The style, as may be said of all of the author's works, is bold and spirited. Indeed, what Byron said of Bonaparte was true of Mayne Reid:

"And quiet to quick bosoms is a hell!"

Of the "Rifle Rangers" and the author, an American correspondent said:

"In London he found a publisher, and awoke to a word-wide fame. The book that could not be published here was translated and republished in every language in Europe, and, returning to this country, he found thousands of delighted readers. Your correspondent, calling once to pay his respects to Lamartine, found that gentleman with Mayne Reid's book in his hand, and the eminent Frenchman loud in its praise. Dumas senior said he could not close the book till he had read the last word."

Mr. Shoberl contrived to pay the author only £25, and this was all the profits Mayne Reid received on the first edition of his first romance. He shortly after realised large sums from the "Parlour Library" edition, published by Sims & M'Intyre, also from various subsequent editions.

Mayne Reid's second romance, the "Scalp Hun-

ters," was written in the old house in which he was born—at Ballyroney, Ireland. On its completion he returned to London, where it was published in 1851 by Charles J. Skeet. Over a million copies of this work have been sold in Great Britain alone, and it has been translated into as many languages as the "Pilgrim's Progress."

Since the death of the author, a correspondent in a London daily asserted that Mayne Reid had never visited the scenes of his "Scalp Hunters," and that his descriptions in this book were drawn from no less than seven different authors. But the wise man who told this tale had to acknowledge that his statement was wrong, making a public apology to this effect.

Shade of Mayne Reid! Such an assertion was enough to make him, like Hamlet's father's ghost, revisit the earth, armed with a tomahawk and scalping-knife, to scalp his traducer. Imagine Mayne Reid carrying about a load of volumes! Why, at the time he wrote the book he had no fixed abode, and his worldly goods were carried in a couple of portmanteaus, the contents of which mostly consisted of articles for the outward adornment of his person; while the tools of his trade were carried in his fertile brain ready for transfer to foolscap. Moreover, the "Scalp Hunters" was written in his old home, in a remote part of the north of Ireland, far away from railways or circulating libraries.

The said volumes would have stood but a poor chance of ever arriving at their destination, since the Captain's portmanteaus, at that time, were always guiltless of locks and keys, and their contents were constantly rolling about railway platforms and landings of steamers. He had been known to arrive at his home in Ireland, minus shirts, collars, and dress suit, requiring him to replenish his wardrobe very often on this account. The few trophies—scalps, etc. —which he had collected during his Mexican and prairie life, being stowed away at the bottom of the portmanteau, escaped the fate which usually befel the upper goods.

A few months before his death Mayne Reid wrote the following letter to the London *Echo*, which, as it has a bearing on the "Scalp Hunters," is admitted in this chapter. He said:—

"SIR,—In this day's issue of the *Echo* appears a paragraph copied from the *New York Tribune*, under the heading, 'White Scalp Hunters.' It tells of an inhuman deed, with rejoicings thereat, done in the 'new and thriving city of Chihuahua.' Chihuahua is not a new city, but one of the oldest in Northern Mexico; and I grieve to add that the deed chronicled there is neither new, nor of rare occurrence. Anyone who has read my novel, the 'Scalp Hunters'—from which the paragraph referred to takes its heading—will find in the penultimate chapter an account *of a similar* incident, thus:

"'The return of the expedition (that of the scalp-hunters) to El Paso was celebrated by a triumphant ovation. Cannon boomed, bells rang, fireworks hissed and sputtered; masses were sung, and music filled the streets. Feasting and merriment followed, and the night was turned into a blazing illumination of wax candles, with *un gran funcion de baile*—fandango. Next morning, as we rode out from El Paso, I chanced to look back. There was a long string of dark objects waving over the gates. There was no mistaking what they were, as they were unlike anything else. They were scalps.'

"In another of my novels, of later date, I have given account of a similar gory adornment over the gates of Chihuahua; and the same may be said of other Mexican frontier towns, as incidents of frequent occurrence during the last three-quarters of a century. Why it is now brought before the civilised world as a novelty is a matter of surprise to yours obediently,

"MAYNE REID."

. . . . . .

Shortly after the publication of the "Rifle Rangers," David Bogue, publisher, of Fleet Street, proposed to Mayne Reid to write a series of boys' books of adventure, the books which earned for him the title of the "Boys' Novelist." (Since this period Mayne Reid has had many imitators in works for juveniles, but he was the earliest in the field, and as yet he stands unrivalled.) The first of these was "The Desert Home, or English Family Robinson." It was published by Bogue at Christmas, 1851, in an

illustrated cloth edition, at 7s. 6d. The *Globe*, February 2, 1852, says:—

"Captain Mayne Reid offers to the juvenile community a little book calculated to excite their surprise and gratify their tastes for the Transatlantic and the wonderful. The dangers and incidents of life in the wilderness are depicted in vivid colours."

The second, third, and fourth chapters, and part of the last, relate to one of the trading trips made by the author (referred to in Chapter II. of this Biography) from St. Louis, Mo., to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and thence to Chihuahua, Mexico. On this particular trip, Mayne Reid was accompanied by a party of eleven, including several hunters. On their return through the wilderness, by a new route, they one day chanced upon a lovely and secluded valley, a veritable oasis in the desert, having only one entrance. Living in the valley were a family of English people, consisting of a man and his wife and several children, who had several years before lost their way while crossing the country with a caravan. Becoming separated from their fellow-travellers, they had accidentally strayed into the valley, where they had lived in peace and comfort ever since.

As the season was far advanced, the proprietor of the lone ranche invited Mayne Reid and his party to spend the winter with him, promising to return with them to St. Louis in the spring. The invitation was accepted, and in the following May the whole party returned to civilisation.

The story consists of an account of the trials and adventures of this family in their desert home, as related to the author, with descriptions of the fauna and flora surrounding them. This work is founded upon actual fact. While preparing it for publication, years afterwards, the author corresponded with the former proprietor of the home in the desert.

. . . . . .

In addition to his literary work, Captain Mayne Reid now established a Rifle Club. His military ardour was not quite quenched. "The Belvidere Rifle Club" was the title. The preliminary conditions for obtaining recognition by the Crown were stated by the Marquis of Salisbury, Lord-lieutenant of Middlesex, to be that the numbers of a Volunteer Rifle Corps should not exceed sixty, and that particulars of the names of the members, and of the mode of training in arms practised, should be supplied.

. . . . . .

One year from the appearance of the "Desert Home," the "Boy Hunters; or, Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo," was published. The dedication of the new work is as follows:—

"For the boy readers of England and America, this book has been written, and to them it is dedicated. That it may interest them so as to rival in their affections the top, the ball, and the kite; that it may impress them, so as to create a taste for that most refining study, the study of Nature; that it may

benefit them, by begetting a fondness for books, the antidotes of ignorance, of idleness, and vice, has been the design, as it is the sincere wish, of their friend the author."

In his preface the author justly "claims consideration for the truthfulness of the materials out of which it is constructed. He makes bold to endorse the genuineness of its scenery and its natural facts. He is not conscious of having taken any liberty, for the sake of effect, with the laws of Nature, with its fauna or its flora. Neither plant nor tree, bird nor mammal has been pressed into service beyond the limits of its geographical range."

Like the first volume of boys' books, the adventures detailed in this one took place on the plains of the Far West.

At Christmas, 1853, the "Young Voyageurs; or, the Boy Hunters in the North," a sequel to the "Boy Hunters," came to delight old and new friends. This was dedicated: "Kind father, gentle and affectionate mother, accept this tribute of a son's gratitude."

The first paragraph of the opening chapter indicates the scene and contents of the story. This is quoted below, as a fair illustration of the bold style of the author, peculiar to all his writings:—

"Boy reader, you have heard of the Hudson's Bay Company? Ten to one you have worn a piece of fur which it has provided for you; if not, your pretty

little sister has—in her muff, or her boa, or as a trimming for her winter dress. Would you like to know something of the country whence came these furs—of the animals whose backs have been stripped to obtain them? As I feel certain that you and I are old friends, I make bold to answer for you, 'Yes.' Come, then! let us journey together to the 'Fur Countries'; let us cross them from south to north."

The London *Nonconformist* said of the "Young Voyageurs" and its author, on the first appearance of the book:—

"As a writer of books for boys, commend us above all men living to Captain Mayne Reid. We venture to add that we should like to see even men of any age who could deny that its perusal gave them both pleasure and instruction."

These juvenile works have been read by millions of readers, and they continue to delight and instruct the youth of all civilised countries. Indeed, it is within the bounds of truth to claim that no other books have been so *repeatedly* read by youthful readers, and none ever imparted more wholesome instruction. On this latter point, the Chicago (III.) *Inter-Ocean* thus testified, a few days after the death of Mayne Reid:

"His books will gladden boys and girls and interest parents, as long as stories of adventure and

travel, romance and heroism, truth and devotion, are allowed an honoured place in the home library. . . . No boy or girl ever read a story by Captain Mayne Reid without having learned something worth remembering through life; and yet none ever gathered from its pages a hurtful knowledge of any sort."

And this from the *New York Herald*, on the same sad event—his death:

"Very notable, indeed, is the deep and wide knowledge of natural history displayed throughout all his writings. . . . It is not an unsafe prediction to say that his works will continue to be as popular fifty years hence as they are to-day."

Mayne Reid's writings distinctly mirror the character of the man—his frank, ardent, and manly nature, and deep sense of justice; his love of the grand and the beautiful—every trait is presented to our view. Many of his books are founded on his own romantic adventures, and thus, as a critic states, the "romance is reality." This latter feature is especially true of his romances for older readers.

. . . . . .

During the year 1852 a strong friendship commenced between Mayne Reid and Louis Kossuth, the ex-Governor of Hungary, who was at that time living in London. The former took an enthusiastic interest in the Hungarian cause, and attended and

took part in many public meetings held on behalf of the refugees.

In February, 1853, when the ill-fated insurrection at Milan took place, Kossuth was anxious to join the insurgents as soon as possible. Mayne Reid proposed that Kossuth should travel across the Continent disguised as his servant. A passport was actually procured from the Foreign Office for this purpose, "for the free passage of Captain Mayne Reid, British subject, travelling on the Continent with a man-servant, James Hawkins, British subject." All was in readiness for their departure, when a telegram in cipher was received by Kossuth stating that the uprising had proved only an *emeute*.

Fortunately for Mayne Reid, he was thus spared risking his life on the altar of friendship, as he was quite prepared to do. Capture in Austria would have been certain death for one, if not for both of them.

In the same month (February) the *Times* published a so-called proclamation which it claimed purported to be addressed by M. Kossuth—who was then in London, as before stated, an exile from his own country—to the Hungarian soldiers in Italy. Mayne Reid, quick to resent an injury to anyone, and especially to a friend of his, wrote a scathing letter to the *Times*, in which he pronounced the said proclamation a forgery. That journal, however, not only refused to publish the letter, but afterwards treated Kossuth's own repudiation of the document,

which Mayne Reid had forwarded to the *Times*, in the same disgraceful manner.

The following is a brief extract from Mayne Reid's letter, which appeared in the *Sun* a day or two after its refusal by the *Times*:—

"In your journal of the 10th inst. appears a telegraphic despatch announcing an insurrection in Milan, and underneath in the same column a document which you state 'purports to be from Kossuth,' and to which is appended the name of that gentleman. Now, sir, M. Kossuth either did write that document, or he did not. If he did, and you published it without his authorisation, you have committed, by all the laws of honour in this land, a dishonourable act. If he did not write it, you have committed, by the laws of justice in this land, a criminal act. I charge you with the committal of both. You are guilty of the latter; and the latter, like a parenthesis, embraces the former. You have published that document without any authorisation from the man whose name is subscribed to it; and upon the day following, in an additional article, you have declared its authenticity, as a proclamation addressed by M. Kossuth, from Bayswater, for the purpose of engaging the Lombard and Hungarian patriots in the late insurrection at Milan. As such, sir, in the name of M. Kossuth, I disavow the document. I pronounce it a forgery. It remains with M. Kossuth to bring you before the bar of the law. It has become my duty to arraign you before the tribunal of public opinion."

A few days later, M. Kossuth wrote Mayne Reid a long letter—that which the *Times* had also refused to publish—in which he disavowed the proclamation, and gave many reasons why he could not have written, or even approved of the document. In this letter he thanked his friend in the following warm terms:—

"I feel myself under high obligations for the generous and chivalric manner in which you stepped forth to do me justice, when you knew me to be wronged in that 'proclamation' matter; as also I feel bound to lasting gratitude towards you for the noble readiness with which you gave me at once your helping hand, at my request, to aid me to reach the field of that action which I did not approve, but which, of course, I must have been anxious to join. . . . I remain, with the highest regards and sincere gratitude, dear sir,

"Yours affectionately and obediently,

"M. KOSSUTH."

This letter was published, in full, in the *Morning Advertiser*. In the editorial columns of the same issue was a long article condemning the course of the *Times*, which paper was referred to as "a journal whose name has for some time past been everywhere regarded as synonymous with all that is unprincipled and ungenerous." The editorial also stated that "Captain Mayne Reid deserves, and will receive, the

thanks of every lover of justice for his spirited and triumphant defence of the character of Kossuth."

Again, in the following April, the *Times* attacked Kossuth, saying that he was storing arms at Rotherhithe. Again Mayne Reid rose to the occasion:—

"Once more you have assailed M. Kossuth," he wrote the *Times;* "once more you have shot your envenomed shaft; and once more, glancing back from the pure shield of that gentleman's honour, your poisoned arrow has recoiled upon yourself. Unscathed stands he. His escutcheon is unstained. Even your foul ink has not soiled it. It is pure as ever; spotless as the pinions of the swan. . . ."

This letter, the full text of which occupied considerable space, was also published in the *Morning Advertiser.*

The "forged proclamation," and later correspondence, called forth numerous editorials from the press, roundly denouncing the course of the *Times*, and warmly praising Mayne Reid for his able defence.

Mayne Reid remained the staunch friend of Louis Kossuth—ever ready to defend him with his resolute pen, as he had been with his sword.

A correspondence was kept up for many years between the two men. The following letters from *M. Kossuth* show its intimate nature:—

"*March* 28, 1856.

"CAPTAIN MAYNE REID,

"MY DEAR SIR,—Here I am again to torment you eternally. I send you the second half of my second lecture for revision; the first half I am just a little cutting to the proper length, inasmuch as this second half, as you shall see, scarcely does admit of much abbreviation. How long can a lecture be?

"Yours affectionately,

"KOSSUTH."

"*June* 6, 1856.

"CAPTAIN MAYNE REID,

"MY DEAR SIR,—Sick, exhausted, and outworn, have had to prepare a new lecture for Glasgow, I whither I travel next Monday. Hard work, this lecturing, but it promises to be remunerative; and I have debts to pay, and my children want bread.

"I am greatly under obligation for your many kindnesses and assistance. I am not unmindful of my obligation, and I hope soon to testify to it; but do me the favour once more to revise my grammar and syntax, I pray you.

"With the most sincere assurance of gratitude, I am,

"Yours in truth and affection,

"KOSSUTH."

"*March* 4, 1861.

"CAPTAIN MAYNE REID,

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Very sorry to hear of the

illness of Madame Reid and of your own indisposition. Bronchitis, that curse of the London climate, is a very trying affair; we know only too much of it.

"Many, many thanks for your kind offer, which I gladly accept as far as your powerful pen is concerned. I am, indeed, in need of it, the more so as I have no time to write myself—have scarcely time to breathe. . . . The papers—at least most of them—are well disposed, even the *Times* (only think!).

"So write! write! write! is the word now more than ever.

"Yours very faithfully,

"KOSSUTH."

. . . . . .

In October, 1853, a meeting was held at the London Tavern, under the presidency of Lord Dudley Stuart, for the purpose of expressing sympathy with Turkey. Mayne Reid was present, and spoke against secret diplomacy. The following is a brief report of his speech:—

"Secret diplomacy! There was not a phrase in the language that was more repugnant to the hearts and the ears of Englishmen. Secret diplomacy! There was dishonour in the sound, there was positive and palpable meanness in the thought. What has secret diplomacy done for England? Was it by secret diplomacy that this mighty nation had been built up? If they looked back upon their former history, they would find that the tricksters of foreign countries had always out-tricked the tricksters of

England. He could understand some mean and petty nation having resort to secret diplomacy, but he could not understand why England should have recourse to it. Their first duty was to know what was right; and having ascertained that, to demand it in the most open and straightforward manner. He was no lover of war; he would be glad to see the sword turned into the ploughshare, but he believed the time had come when war was not only just, but a strict and holy necessity. They were bound by treaty to protect the integrity of Turkey. Throw interest to the winds; their honour called upon them."

A week later, on the 22nd of October, the British and French fleets entered the Bosphorus, determined to prevent the dismemberment of Turkey, although it was not until the following March that war was declared against Russia.

About this period it was supposed by many that Mayne Reid would enter the lists as champion in a political career, as he then numbered among his personal friends Richard Cobden, as well as other men of note. But it was not Mayne Reid's fate to earn his laurels as a politician. He only occasionally "aired his views" on the public platform.

CHAPTER XI

The Captain and his "Child-Wife"—Romantic Courtship and Marriage—Amusing Incidents.

MAYNE REID had now at length met "his fate"—not in the dark-eyed Mexican senorita, nor the youthful loves of his boyhood, nor bright-eyed damsels of his maturer years, who may have worshipped at the hero's shrine, but in a fair little English girl, a child—scarce thirteen years of age. Her name was Elizabeth Hyde, the only daughter of George William Hyde, and granddaughter of the late Saville John Hyde, of Quorn House, Leicestershire, and Sevenoaks, Kent, a lineal descendant of Edward Hyde, the first Earl of Clarendon.

In his novel entitled "The Child-Wife," Captain Mayne Reid thus refers to his first meeting with Elizabeth Hyde, the child who afterwards became the captain's "child-wife."

"In less than ten minutes after, I was in love with a child! There are those who will deem this an improbability. Nevertheless, it was true; for we are recording an actual experience." Later he says: "That child has impressed me with a feeling I never *had* before. Her strange look has done it. I feel as

if she had sounded the bottom of my soul! It may be fate, destiny; but as I live, Roseveldt, I have a presentiment she will yet be my wife!"

The courtship and marriage was a little romance in itself; and I here give briefly its chief outlines:—

"My first meeting with my future husband occurred in London, where I was then living with my aunt, the widow of my uncle, an elder brother of my father's, who had brought me up soon after the death of my mother, which happened when I was a baby.

"Captain Mayne Reid was one evening a guest at my aunt's house, and until that memorable night I had not even heard his name. Famous authors and warriors had no part in my life at that date. But during that same evening the gallant Captain had chanced once or twice to see myself, and, as he himself expressed it, had 'fallen in love with me at first sight.' While on my part, the gallant hero had made no impression whatever; for when I was asked that night by someone who had not yet had a look at the lion, 'What is Captain Mayne Reid like?' 'Oh! he is a middle-aged gentleman,' was my reply, giving no other description of him at all. This was afterwards repeated to Mayne Reid, and he allowed that his vanity was much wounded thereat.

"On the following morning, my aunt said to me: 'Captain Mayne Reid has fallen desperately in love with you, my child! He did nothing but talk of you the whole of the evening.'

"To which I replied: 'You can tell Captain Mayne Reid that I have not fallen in love with him.'

Indeed, so little impression had this speech of my aunt's made upon me, that in a few days the 'middle-aged gentleman' was quite forgotten. Other and graver matters occupied my thoughts. The first real sorrow of my life had already entered into it, filling my heart with a sadness never to be forgotten; this was the sudden and tragic death of my dear uncle, who had been to me as a second father. He had taught me all I then knew of classic lore, and the heroes of old; and child, though I was, I had been his little companion, and shared his confidence.

"Several weeks had elapsed since the night on which I had stood for a moment face to face with my fate, when one afternoon, as I was seated alone in the drawing-room, busily employed upon a doll's outfit, a gentleman entered the room, and coming towards me, extended his hand, saying: 'Do you not remember me?' As he had a very foreign appearance, I exclaimed: 'Oh, yes! You are Monsieur—' But the visitor interrupted me by mentioning his name: 'Mayne Reid.' Presently he asked me how old I was, which I told him; then the Captain replied: 'You are getting old enough to have a lover, and you must have me!'

"At this critical moment my aunt came into the room, and I gathered up my doll's garments, and retired to think it over.

"But I had already formed my ideal—taking for it my own dear father and my dead uncle, who each represented to my mind all that was good and handsome; and my 'middle-aged' lover did not come up *to my* standard.

"After this, Captain Mayne Reid paid almost daily visits to my aunt's house, in the hope of seeing the niece — myself. But he found so little favour in my sight just then that I intentionally avoided him. Still did he persevere in his visits to my aunt, on one pretext or another. He had discovered her weakness for novel-reading, and plied her with no end of 'light literature,' until at last aunt began to think herself the attraction, seeing that Mayne Reid spent hours in her society; but 'all is fair in love and war.'"

(An old Quaker lady—a great friend, who was frequently at the house at the time of Mayne Reid's visits—was under the same impression, and at the first visit she paid after his marriage, said to Mayne Reid, in her quaint fashion, "Why, Mayne, I always thought thou wast after Eliza"—my aunt.)

"Amongst other questions, my 'middle-aged' lover asked me if I thought him handsome? To which question, with the brave frankness of childhood, I answered, 'No!'"

(This was another wound to the vanity of the hero of Chapultepec and wounder of hearts, who, according to an American paper, had been described as a "mixture of Adonis and the Apollo Belvidere, with a dash of the Centaur.")

"But I knew nothing of all this, and the gallant Captain was totally unlike my heroes — the 'Red Cross Knight' and 'Jack the Giant-Killer.' So the shafts of his fascination fell harmless at my feet.

"Just at that time my middle-aged lover conceived an intense jealousy of one of my would-be boy-

lovers — a young 'mid.'—whose frank, boyish face was much nearer to my ideal. My future husband happened to be present on the day when the young sailor-boy called to say farewell before leaving to rejoin his ship, and this was the first and last occasion of the meeting of the 'rivals.'

"Mayne Reid confessed to my aunt that young 'W.' was the handsomest youth whom he had ever seen! But though the 'sailor-boy' and myself never met again, my husband cherished a long memory of him, and it was only a year previous to his own death that he hea d that his 'hated rival' had been swallowed up by an earthquake a few years back; and as my husband listened to this story, I watched a smile of intense satisfaction pass over his features, while he looked at me out of the 'tail of his eye.'

"Relative to this episode, my husband frequently expressed himself thus to his friends: 'My wife is very fond of sailors. I am sure she prefers the Navy to the Army!' This would be given with more emphasis if his auditor happened to be a naval hero.

. . . . . .

"At last I was beginning to feel some interest in my persistent lover. It must have been pity at first, for I imagined he was a refugee, having lately heard his name in connection with the refugees, though to my childish mind a refugee had no definite meaning, only I thought it was something to be sorry for, and I pictured to myself that perhaps Mayne Reid had no parents or friends, for I had then no opportunity of learning about him.

"One day he brought me the 'Scalp Hunters,' telling me to read the book, and I should find myself there. This book was written and published before the Captain had ever seen me, but he afterwards told me that Zöe was a 'foreshadowing,' and that at first sight of me he had exclaimed to himself, 'This is Zöe!'

"At that period I had never read a novel, and had I been asked the question, 'Who is your favourite author?' I should probably have answered, 'John Bunyan,' for I had read the 'Pilgrims' Progress' oftener than any other book, carrying a little, well-worn volume of it to my bed most nights, and putting it under my pillow for reading as soon as I awoke in the morning. At the age of seven years I had already begun to contemplate starting on a pilgrimage, and had selected a certain swampy part of the town as the 'Slough of Despond' from whence to take my departure. I questioned my uncle as to how far it was to the 'Valley of the Shadow of Death,' and thought myself quite equal to fighting with 'Apollyon.' My dear uncle, thinking to please me, bought me a new copy of my favourite, but I cried for my old volume. Though battered and torn, it was dear. I could not exchange 'old lamps for new.' My childish 'pilgrimage' had likewise a 'foreshadowing.'

. . . . . .

"My aunt was now about to be married again to a clergyman, and to remove to a distant suburb of London. Just before our departure Captain Mayne Reid called one day to wish us good-bye, as he was

going on a visit to Paris. My aunt was from home, so I had an interview alone with the Captain. He said to me:

"'I shall not know where to find my little Zöe on my return.'

"But I could not enlighten him, since I did not myself know our future whereabouts. There was rather a sad expression on the face of my would-be lover as he retained my hand in the good-bye; but I somewhat impatiently turned away, little thinking how long it would be ere we should meet again.

"The door had no sooner closed on his retreating figure than I relented, thinking to myself I might have been kinder. I walked to a side window which looked down the street, and as I stood watching the figure of Mayne Reid he suddenly looked back and kissed his hand to me; and from that day, for two years, we never saw or heard of each other. For when Captain Reid returned from Paris he lost sight of my aunt, and they never renewed their acquaintance. Thus he had no tidings of myself, and after my aunt's re-marriage I had left her to live with my father in the country. My aunt's new husband had told her that he should not like to have the responsibility of myself, since I was 'likely to grow up very attractive.' Perhaps having heard of my conquests so early in life, his reverence imagined that he might find me a difficult little article to manage.

"My aunt had written to my father telling him about Captain Mayne Reid, though these two had not yet seen each other, and neither my father nor any of my friends imagined that there was anything *serious* in this 'love affair,' and were only amused at

the thought of such a mere child captivating so great a man."

. . . . . .

Two years had now elapsed since the parting in London, when, without the least knowledge that his Zöe was there, fate brought Captain Mayne Reid to the town at which she was staying, where he had been invited to address a public meeting on behalf of the Polish refugees.

"I was one of the audience at the Mechanics' Hall, where the meeting was held, accompanied by my father and other friends. An electric thrill seemed to pass through me as Captain Reid entered the room. Instantly, as though drawn by an invisible hand, and without a word to my friends, I left my seat and followed in the direction I saw him take. There was a platform at one end, occupied by the speakers and a few ladies and gentlemen. He took his seat on the platform, and I mine also, just opposite to him. As yet we had not spoken, our eyes only seeking each other throughout the whole evening.

"It was like being in a dream. There was a sea of faces below me, but I seemed to distinguish nothing. Of the speeches made I have not the faintest recollection!

"At last it all came to an end—near midnight. The audience were fast dispersing in the body of the hall: the lights were being extinguished. The few who remained on the platform were hand-shaking and congratulating the speakers. Captain Reid had a number around him. I might also have joined

them—we were then standing only a few feet apart—but something held me back.

The place was now almost in darkness—all were leaving the platform. I caught a glimpse of my father hurrying towards me, and could just dimly see two or three gentlemen, evidently waiting for the Captain, who was still engaged in earnest conversation with one person.

"It seemed as though we were again about to be severed. At that moment Captain Reid came towards me, grasped my hand, and I just caught the hurried words:

"'I leave for London by the next train. Send me your address.'

Speech seemed to have left me, but it flashed upon me that I was in ignorance of his, and managed to stammer out:

"'I do not know where.'

"He instantly handed me his card, and was gone. My father lifted me in his arms down from the platform, and we groped our way out in the darkness. I then learned that Captain Reid had only arrived that evening, and was obliged to leave by the midnight train for London.

"On awaking the next morning, I immediately sprang out of bed to see if the card which I had left on my table the previous night was still there—or if it had not all been a dream. But there was the card, with the name and address in full.

"It was not long after breakfast before I wrote and posted the formal little note:

"'As you asked me last night to send you my address, I do so.'

"By return of post I received the following reply:

"'My little Zöe: only say that you love me, and I will be with you at once.'

"To which I replied: 'I think I do love you.'

"On receipt of this, the Captain put himself into an express train, and quickly covered the hundred and fifty miles which separated us. My lover told me that when we had parted in London, two years before, he had feared it was impossible to make me love him; but that he could never forget me, and, in spite of all obstacles, had the firm conviction that I should yet be his.

"My father rather reluctantly gave his consent to our marriage, the date of which was then fixed. I remember telling my father that I should be obliged to marry Captain Reid all the same, even if he could not consent. But his disposition was the most gentle and confiding, so he yielded.

"The last letter from my *fiancé* contained the following:

"'I shall soon now call you my own, and gaze again into those beautiful eyes. Your love falls on my heart like dew on the withered leaf. I am getting old, and *blasé*, and fear that your love for me is only a romance, which cannot last when you know me better. Do you think you can love me in my dressing-gown and slippers?'"

. . . . . .

Shortly after this, Elizabeth Hyde became Captain Mayne Reid's "child-wife." Her aunt was greatly astonished at learning the news, for she was daily

expecting her niece's arrival in London, *en route* for school, to finish her education. The child had gone to school, of a different kind—to educate herself in the experiences of life!

. . . . . .

After Mayne Reid's marriage, many amusing incidents occurred in relation to his "child-wife," as she was called by her husband. One day the author, accompanied by his little lady, was choosing a bonnet for her at a fashionable milliner's in Regent Street. The milliner had addressed Mrs. Reid several times as "Miss." Somewhat irritated, her husband finally exclaimed, rather sharply, "This lady is my wife!" The milliner, looking very much astonished, replied:

"I beg your pardon, sir; I thought the young lady was about returning to school, and that you were choosing a bonnet for her to take."

Two years later, when they were residing in the country, Mrs. Reid was one day in the village baker's shop, ordering, among some other things, some biscuits. Whilst the old man behind the counter was weighing them out, he offered some to Mrs. Reid. She thought it rather odd, but not liking to appear offended, took a biscuit. The baker then inquired: "How is Captain and Mrs. Reid?" Mrs. Reid was much surprised as well as amused at this question, thinking, of course, that the baker must know her, as she had often been in the shop with her husband.

She replied: "Captain Reid is quite well, and I—I am Mrs. Reid."

The old man's face was a study for an artist; he nearly fell back behind his counter, exclaiming: "I humbly beg your pardon, ma'am; I thought you was the young lady visiting at the house during the holidays."

The Captain's wife being still taken for a schoolgirl, it was necessary for her to assume an extra amount of dignity. It appeared that the villagers had fancied that Mrs. Reid was an elderly invalid lady, who did not go out much.

About this time, Mrs. Reid's father was on a visit to them, and used to accompany his daughter on horseback nearly every day. He looked so young that the servants were asked: "Who is that young gentleman who is always riding out with Mrs. Reid?" They got things considerably mixed, taking the husband for the father, and the father for something else, the latter being much the younger-looking of the two, though both were about the same age.

A short time before Mayne Reid's death, he and Mrs. Reid were spending an evening at a friend's house, where the late John Oxenford was one of the guests. Just as they were departing, Mr. Oxenford said to Mrs. Reid: "I have had a very pleasant surprise in meeting your father again; he is as entertaining as ever." Mrs. Reid was rather puzzled, since her father had been dead some years, until the

hostess explained, "This is Captain Reid's wife, not his daughter." There was a general laugh all round.

These funny incidents were constantly occurring. Sometimes Mrs. Reid was supposed to be in no way related to Captain Mayne Reid, and would hear all kinds of remarks and comments passed upon the famous author, which she would afterwards relate for his amusement.

Mayne Reid used to say that he could not have endured having an old wife. On one occasion, when attending a large soirée, a somewhat elderly dame of his acquaintance attached herself to him, and promenaded the room by his side for a great part of the evening. Mrs. Reid wondered what was making her husband look so savage. Finally, he came across to her and said:

"I want you to keep close by me for the rest of the evening, or people will be taking that old thing for my wife!"

Mayne Reid was proud of his "child-wife," and liked her to remain the "child-wife" till the end.

CHAPTER XII

Rural Life—An Amusing Incident—Long Drives to London—Boys' Books and a New Romance—Letter to the London *Athenæum* — Moves to Gerrard's Cross —More Books—Novel Trip to Ireland—Returns to Literary Work—Method of Writing—Curious Habit.

SHORTLY after his marriage, Mayne Reid rented a furnished cottage at Stokenchurch, Oxfordshire, thirty-six miles from London. He still retained a house in London, but had a fancy for rural life, and also desired some shooting for the winter.

The little cottage was situated far back from the road on the edge of a common, surrounded by a wood, five miles from a railway station, and two miles from the nearest village. There was no postal delivery, and very little sign of human life, save for an occasional waggon passing in the distance, and a coach on the high road once a week. To this lonely spot the young bride was taken, after a brief residence in London. Mayne Reid was out shooting frequently, as it was a sport he enjoyed very much. His wife was often left alone in the house. Half playfully one day she remarked that she would go back to London if she

were left alone so much in that dreary spot. In fact, the "child-wife" was beginning to think she had better have gone to school after all.

One morning, soon after her husband had gone out shooting, Mrs. Reid, accompanied by her little dog, took a walk through the woods, instead of riding on her pony about the solitary roads, as was her usual habit. On returning in about an hour's time, she was greatly amused to see her husband and the man-servant in a stooping attitude not far from the house, closely engaged in scrutinising the ground. So intent were they that the approach of Mrs. Reid was unnoticed, and she stood watching them for a minute or two. The little dog finally ran forward, when her husband suddenly looked up, with an expression of joy on his face on seeing his wife. He exclaimed:

"Oh! my dear, I thought you had gone, and we were trying to track your footsteps in the snow. The servants had not seen you go out, and when I went to your room I saw your hat-box open, and said to myself that you had carried out your threat and gone off to London.

The monotony was occasionally varied by an alarm in the middle of the night. At such times, Mayne Reid, armed with his sword, and followed by his wife bearing a lighted candle, would make a tour of the house. The alarm generally proved false; but had a housebreaker been encountered by the resolute

and impetuous ex-soldier, it is safe to say he would not have escaped with a whole skin!

For novelty, and perhaps not without hopes of meeting with an exciting adventure of some kind, Mayne Reid frequently drove himself and wife up to London. They usually started at three o'clock in the morning, when it was pitch dark, and were lighted down the drive-way to the carriage by a servant, lamp in hand. The winter was very severe, and on several occasions when the morning light came, it revealed icicles hanging from the horses' bits, while the moustaches of the master and whiskers of the groom were white with frost. After remaining a day or two at their town house, they returned home in the same independent fashion.

The "Forest Exiles," a boys' book devoted to the daily life and adventures of a family who settled in the Andes Mountains of Peru, was written and published in 1854.

The "Bush Boys," the first of his South African books, was completed in time for Christmas, 1855. This work was dedicated:

"To three very dear young friends, Franz, Louis, and Vilma, the children of a still older friend—the friend of freedom, of virtue, and of truth—Louis Kossuth."

The charming "Quadroon; or, A Lover's Adventures in Louisiana," commenced and nearly finished

several years before, was completed at Stokenchurch. It was published in 1856, in three volumes, and proved one of the author's most popular romances. Shortly after its first appearance, it was dramatised and performed at the City of London Theatre.

Some years later (1861) a controversy arose as to the source of Mr. Boucicault's drama, "The Octoroon." This induced Mayne Reid to send the following letter to the London *Athenæum*, which appeared in its issue of December 14:—

"During a residence of many years—commencing in 1839, and ending, with intervals of absence, in 1848—the author of the 'Quadroon' was an eye-witness of nearly a score of slave auctions, at which beautiful quadroon girls were sold in bankruptcy, and bought up, too, notoriously with the motives that actuated the Gayarre of his tale; and upon such actual incidents was the story of the 'Quadroon' founded. Most of the book was written in 1852; but, as truthfully stated in its Preface, in consequence of the appearance of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' its publication was postponed until 1856. The writing of it was finished early in 1855. With regard to the 'Quadroon' and the Adelphi drama, the resemblance is just that which must ever exist between a melodrama and a romance from which it is taken; and when the 'Octoroon' was first produced in New York—January, 1860—its scenes and characters were at once identified by the newspaper critics of that *city* as being transcripts from the pages of the

'Quadroon.' Some of its scenes as at present performed are original—at least, they are not from the 'Quadroon'—but these introduced incidents are generally believed not to have improved the story; and one of them—the poisoning of the heroine—Mr. Boucicault has had the good taste to alter, restoring the beautiful quadroon to the happier destiny to which the romance had consigned her. It might be equally in good taste if the clever dramatist were to come out before the public with a frank avowal of the source whence his drama has been drawn."

The "White Chief: A Legend of Northern Mexico," was published in 1855. This was followed in 1856 by the "Hunter's Feast: or Conversations around the Camp-Fire." In this latter work the author relates many stories which were told around the camp-fires of a party of hunters—of which he was one—who visited the Far West in search of buffalo. One or more of the author's own adventures are included.

Mayne Reid was now getting tired of the solitude of Stokenchurch, the novelty having worn off. During their frequent drives to and from London, he had taken a great fancy to the neighbourhood of Gerrard's Cross, Buckinghamshire, and finally settled upon a small house there, situated on the high-road, twenty miles from London. Into this he moved his belongings in the autumn of 1856. Shortly after, he purchased a long lease of this and a cottage on the

opposite side of the road. He called the one he occupied "The Ranche," and soon commenced to enlarge and make it more commodious.

The greater number of Mayne Reid's books were written in this rural retreat. His Christmas book for 1856 was entitled the "Young Yagers," being a sequel to the "Bush Boys." During this year he also commenced the "War Trail: or Hunt of the Wild Horse," the first chapter of which appeared in *Chambers's Journal*, January 3, 1857.

In the spring of 1857, Mayne Reid proposed to take a little recreation in a novel way, as he had been working very hard. In the month of May, the author and his wife, accompanied by a maid, man-servant, and a Dalmatian dog, set off in an open carriage, drawn by a pair of Norwegian cobs, to visit Ireland. They carried a set of cooking utensils with them, driving thus all the way to Liverpool, a six days' journey. They cooked most of their food in the open air, and camped out two nights, having got benighted on the lonely road. They, with their horses and carriage, crossed over from Liverpool to Dundalk in a steamer.

The Captain and his wife remained in Ireland, at the author's old home, until the following August, during which time they took long drives about the country and also explored the Mourne Mountains. Mayne Reid's Norwegian ponies are talked about to the present day by his Irish friends. They returned

home to Gerrard's Cross in the same novel manner by a different route, encountering several small adventures on their way. On putting up at Derby, Captain Reid was taken for the Queen's Jester, and was accosted by several people with: "How do you do, Mr Wallet." They had already been taken for a circus company, and the groom was asked where they were going to put up. Entering into the joke, he told them, "At the next town."

Once more at home and in his study, Mayne Reid was again "on the war-path," arrayed in his war-paint, making ready to delight his "boy public" and older readers with new tales of adventure, romance, and natural history lore.

. . . . . .

Mayne Reid was unskilled with the pencil, but he had a curious habit of introducing odd figures in certain parts of his manuscript, intended to represent objects described and to be illustrated. To anyone but himself, however, they would have represented nothing in particular.

His usual manner of writing was peculiar. He rarely sat at a table, but reclined on a couch, arrayed in dressing-gown and slippers, with a portable desk, and fur robe across his knees, the latter even in hot weather, and a cigar between his lips, which was constantly going out and being relighted, while the floor all around him was strewn with matches. Latterly, the dressing gown was discarded for a large

Norfolk jacket, made from his own sheeps' wool ; and he would sit and write at the window in a large arm-chair, with an improvised table in front of him resting on his knees, upon which at night he would have a couple of candles placed, the inevitable cigar " materials " and matches being the accessories.

He had a singular habit of reading in bed, with newspapers, manuscript, and a lighted candle on his pillow. At least a score or more of times he has been found in the morning with the paper burnt to black tinder all around him, but neither himself nor the bed-clothes in the least singed. No wonder his friends thought he bore a charmed life!

CHAPTER XIII

New Tales—Continues the Drives to London—Taken for a Circus Manager—Mania for attending Auction Sales—Leases a House in London—New Books for Boys—Returns to Gerrard's Cross—A Jamaica Romance—Wonderful Descriptive Powers—Poem on the Civil War—Attends the "American Thanksgiving Dinner"—"Cannibal Charlie"—"Lost Lenore."

THE next stories from Mayne Reid's pen, published in 1858-59, were the "Plant Hunters," "Oseola; or, the Half Blood," and "Ran Away to Sea."

The first of these books related to the adventures of a botanist in the Himalayan Mountains. This work, and a sequel which appeared a few years later, should be classed among the author's best productions for boys. The "Plant Hunters," which was dedicated to one of his early teachers, the Rev. David M'Kee. "Oseola" first appeared in *Chambers's Journal* in 1858; it is a charming romance, relating to Florida during Seminole War times. "Ran Away to Sea" was the author's first essay at writing a tale of the sea. This was so well received that another of the same character, entitled the "Boy Tar," closely followed.

Next came the "Wild Huntress," published first in *Chambers's Journal*, the scene of which lies in Tennessee, and "Odd People; a Popular Description of Singular Races of Men." Both of these books were published in 1860. The former was afterwards dramatised by the author.

By way of recreation, Mayne Reid still amused himself by driving up to London, though at a more reasonable hour. He possessed a variety of vehicles as well as a number of horses. Sometimes he would drive himself in a large yellow brake, with a pair of black horses, invariably accompanied by one or two spotted carriage dogs, his wife mounted on the box seat beside him.

Driving up to London one morning in this fashion, they happened to be just at the rear end of a circus, and as they passed through the toll gate, just beyond Uxbridge, the gate-keeper said to Mayne Reid: "Are you going to pay for all? You're Mr. Cook" (the proprietor of the circus), "aren't you, sir? The last one as went through said the next would pay for all." There was some difficulty in convincing the man that the author was not connected with the circus in any way. So it appeared that the showmen had all cleared the gate without paying toll!

At times Mayne Reid possessed a perfect mania for attending auction sales when in town, and buying the strangest collection of things for which he had no earthly use. He would often drive home with a load

of these articles of virtu. On one occasion, while staying on a visit at a friend's house in town, he rather horrified the swell footman who helped to unload the hansom thus similarly laden.

In the latter part of the year 1860, Mayne Reid bought the lease of a house in Woburn Place, London, where he took up his residence. At Woburn Place, during this and the following year, he wrote "Bruin; or, the Grand Bear Hunt," for Messrs. Routledge; the "Wood Rangers; or, the Trappers of Sonora"; "Quadrupeds; What They Are and Where Found"; and the "Tiger Hunter; or, Hero in Spite of Himself," adapted from the French of Louis de Bellmare.

The atmosphere of London, or something else, did not seem to agree with the gallant Captain, so in the spring of 1861 he returned to his country home at Gerrard's Cross. Here he soon busied himself in writing another romance, entitled the "Maroon," with the island of Jamaica as the theatre of action. It first appeared in *Cassell's Family Paper*, in the year 1862. The author dramatised the work afterwards, and it was performed at one of the London theatres.

Mayne Reid's wonderful faculty of observation and description is clearly evidenced in all his books. In the "Maroon," for instance, his descriptions relating to Jamaica, and the wild maroons of the mountains, their peculiar habits and strange customs, are so accurate and true to life that more than one resident of the island has declared it almost impossible to

believe that the author has never set foot there. Yet such was the fact.

Before commencing a boys' book, or a romance, the scene of which he was not personally acquainted with, Mayne Reid thoroughly studied his subject, from the best and various authorities, until he became an authority himself on the matter. He sought facts, and he conveyed them to his readers in such a delightful manner that they retained an impression of them through life.

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When the Civil War broke out in the United States between North and South, Mayne Reid strongly sympathised with the Union. Like an old war-horse, as it were, he "sniffed the battle from afar," and longed to join the fray in defence of the starry flag under which he had so gallantly fought and shed his blood in the war with Mexico.

The following beautiful and spirited poem reflects his thoughts and feelings on this subject. It was written at two different periods—at the commencement and soon after the termination of the war—and published in some American paper under the *nom-de-plume* "Prenez Garde."

"TO THE UNITED STATES.

"Oh, land of my longings, beyond the Atlantic,
What horrible dream has disturbed thy repose?
What demon has driven thy citizens frantic—
A grief to their friends, and a joy to their foes?

"Is it true they are arming to kill one another?
That sire and son are in hostile array?
That brother is baring his blade against brother—
Each madly preparing the other to slay?

"Is it true the star-banner, so dear to the sight
Of all freemen, may fall by a fusionist's blow—
That banner I've borne through the midst of the fight,
Side by side with thy sons as we charged on the foe?

"I would not, I will not, I cannot believe it;
Oh! rally around it, and stand by the staff!
Or the childhood of men will have reason to grieve it,
And the tyrants of men will exultingly laugh.

"Aye, sure will the priests and princes of earth
Greet the fall of thy flag with a joyous 'hurrah!'
Even now scarce suppressing demoniac mirth,
They'll hail thy decadence with fiendish 'ha, ha!'

"To him who would help them to win their foul game,
Whether or Northern or Southern—no matter which claims him—
Be a brand on his brow, and a blight on his fame,
And scorn on the lips of the humblest who names him!

"Be palsied the arm that draws sword fratricidal!
May the steel of the traitor be broken in two!
May his maiden betrothed, on the day of his bridal,
Prove faithless to him, as he has been to you!

"United, no power 'neath heaven can shake thee,
No purple-robed despot e'er smile on thy shame;
Asunder, as reeds, they will bruise thee and break thee,
And waste thee like flax in the pitiless flame.

"Woe, woe to the world, if this fatal division
Should ever arrive in the ranks of the free!
Oh, brother! avoid then the deadly collision,
And millions unborn will sing praises to thee!

"LONDON, 1861.

"The collision came with, Heaven knows, enough ruin; but, happily, not all I had feared.

"And Heaven be praised that the storm has passed over,
And left the good ship still afloat on the wave,
With the same starry flag proudly waving above her,
More than ever the flag of the free and the brave.

"Some tackle destroyed—rigging worthless and rotten;
Some spars she can spare—they but hampered her way;
While her beaconing star to a new birth begotten,
Will shine with a surer and holier ray.

"Beware the re-rigging! Let not the old leaven
Form part of her sail-cloth or cordage again:
For scathed upon earth, and accursed in Heaven,
'Twould prove in the tempest unfit for the strain.

"Fling it off from her decks—let it drift to the leeward—
Anywhere—anywhere—out of her track;
She will never be sure of a safe passage seaward,
While clings to her taffrail the traitorous wreck.

"You have torn from her log-book the leaf of dishonour,
Have swept through her scuppers foul slavery's stain;
You have blazoned anew her old star-spangled banner,
Baptized by the blood of your martyrs all slain.

"Then beware, while you weep o'er the ghastly bereaving,
As you think of the peril, the pain, and the cost,
Let the mercy you show in the midst of your grieving,
Be so 'strained' that the lesson shall never be lost.

"LONDON, 1867."

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On the 26th of November, 1863, Mayne Reid and his wife were present at the "American Thanksgiving Dinner,' held at St. James's Hall, London. The chair was occupied by the Hon. Robert J. Walker,

and among the guests were Hon. Charles Francis Adams, United States Minister, and George Thompson, M.P. The latter was introduced by the chairman as "the hero of this century for the extinguishment of slavery." Mayne Reid was called upon to respond to the toast, "The Army and Navy, Immortal Champions of Freedom, who Bled that our Country may Live." The soldier-author responded to the invitation with a speech of extraordinary vigour in favour of the Federal cause.

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Towards the close of the year 1862 a singular being presented himself at Mayne Reid's house in London. He was attired in a rough blanket, with his head passed through a hole in the middle—a sort of poncho—and he carried a brown paper parcel under his arm. Mayne Reid listened to his story, which was to the effect that he had lately landed from Australia, and that he had travelled round the earth more than six times, and had also lived with cannibals.

The author invited the "cannibal" to stay and eat, as it was just luncheon-time. During the meal, the latter remarked that he scarcely knew how to use a knife and fork, having been away from civilisation so long. Mrs. Reid listened with horror to his numerous and wonderful tales. During the repast the host was obliged to leave the table, to see some one in his study; whereupon Mrs. Reid at once made an

excuse for following him, fearing that the "man-eater" might eat her up.

The parcel contained a story, which the man had written. He had tried to get an audience with some publishers in London, but they would not listen to him, his appearance was too forbidding. His name was Charles Beach, otherwise "Cannibal Charlie." Mayne Reid told him to leave his manuscript and he would look at it, at the same time giving the man a sum of money, and telling him to get himself a "rig-out." At the "cannibal's" next appearance, he was looking a little more civilised.

With the help of Mayne Reid, the manuscript which the "cannibal" had submitted to his revision finally developed into a three-volume novel, and was published in 1864 under the title, "Lost Lenore; or, The Adventures of a Rolling Stone." The preface to this interesting and truthful story is as follows:—

"A 'Rolling Stone' came tumbling across my track. There was a crystalline sparkle about it, proclaiming it no common pebble. I took it up and submitted it to examination—it proved to be a diamond! A diamond of the 'first water,' slightly encrusted with quartz, needing but the chisel of the lapidary to lay bare its brilliant beauties to the gaze of an admiring world. Charles Beach is the proprietor of this precious gem, I but the artisan entrusted with its setting. If my share of the task has been attended with labour, it has been a 'labour of love,' for which *I shall* feel amply rewarded in listening to the con-

gratulations which are due—and will certainly be given—to the lucky owner of the 'Rolling Stone,' the finder of 'Lost Lenore.'"

Mayne Reid failed to do himself justice in the above preface, for he had recast and nearly rewritten the whole work before it was suitable for publication; but he possessed a generous and sympathising nature, and preferred that the unfortunate Beach should have the major part of the credit.

Mayne Reid continued to befriend the "cannibal," who at length found some literary work to do in London, where he also found himself a wife, and lived in a sort of Bohemian fashion from hand to mouth.

The last time that Mayne Reid and his wife encountered the "cannibal" was in New York in 1870. His parents had paid his passage out, and had prevailed upon him to return to his paternal home. Beach said he had been trying to "live respectable," but found a civilised life very irksome, and as the Maine Liquor Law prevailed in his native State he had come to New York on a "spree." The "cannibal" on this occasion was guiltless of shirt collar, saying he found laundry in New York too expensive a luxury. Perhaps a civilised life and trying to "live respectable" did not agree with poor Charlie, for shortly afterwards they heard of his death.

CHAPTER XIV

Treatise on Croquet—A Law-Suit—Fondness for Personal Adornment—His "Spiritual Welfare"—Many New Books—Especially Busy—Proprietor of an Omnibus Line—His Masterpiece—Wild Rides—Peculiar Charm of his Books—Longing for Old Scenes—In the Zenith of Fame and Fortune—Builds "The Ranche"—A Seat in Parliament in Prospect.

A "Treatise on Croquet" was the title of a little work published by Mayne Reid in the autumn of 1863. He was an enthusiastic lover of the game, had made a careful study of the rules, and had spent many a happy hour in sending his opponent to "Hong-Kong."

Calling at a friend's house one day, he picked up a little book entitled, "The Rules of Croquet," by an "Old Hand." After examination, the author found it to be a copy of his own book with a new title. It had been sent out in boxes of croquet, and Lord Essex was responsible for its publication. Mayne Reid demanded an explanation and withdrawal of the work from the market. This being refused him he consulted his solicitor, and the result was a

Chancery suit against Lord Essex. The matter was eventually compromised by the payment of £125, as well as the costs of the suit, the withdrawal of the book, and the destruction of all copies on hand.

The gallant Captain was possessed of a great weakness for personal adornment, even to the extent of dandyism. He used to remark, "My vanity will never die," and he certainly did retain this faculty till the end.

Sometimes his rural neighbours would be startled by the author's appearance in the grounds surrounding his dwelling, arrayed in a gorgeous dressing-gown of bright scarlet, with smoking-cap to match; at other times he would promenade on Gerrard's Cross Common in the latest Bond Street "get up," or attired in a Norfolk jacket, and wearing a sort of black Mexican sombrero on his head. Then he would be seen galloping about on his black horse, with a military saddle and a tiger skin on the animal's back. Captain Mayne Reid's many eccentricities were frequently the theme of his rural neighbours' gossip.

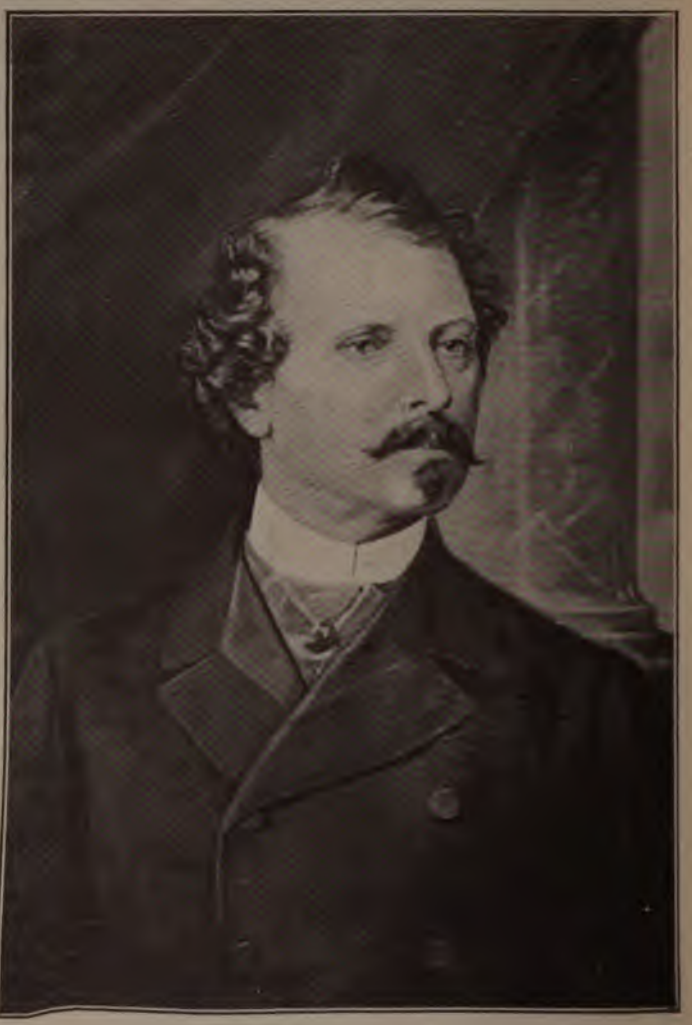
On first taking up residence at Gerrard's Cross there was no church immediately near, the parish church of Iver being some distance away; and the good mother of Mayne Reid was much concerned at hearing this, and knowing that her son possessed a portable wooden house on wheels for the accommodation of his men-servants, old Mrs. Reid conceived a

bright idea, and wrote to her son's wife urging the latter to persuade Mayne to make use of this wooden building as a place of worship, and allow her to send over a young minister from the north of Ireland. The letter concluded with, "I think I see you, my dear Elizabeth, curl your beautiful lip, while Mayne exclaims, 'Is my mother mad?'"

However, greatly to the good mother's satisfaction, the Memorial Church on Gerrard's Cross Common was then projected, and soon after completed. The dear old lady had imagined her son and his belongings to be living in a benighted state of heathenism, and thought it time to invoke St. Patrick to cross the Irish Sea and banish all the snakes from the common.

Finally, the gallant Captain was a constant attendant at the church on Gerrard Cross Common; but it was said that he did so more for the purpose of "studying the bonnets" than for the good of his soul. His inattention to the service was frequently commented upon, and one morning the post brought him the following, sent anonymously by a young lady:—

"A friend who is deeply interested in Captain Mayne Reid's spiritual welfare forwards a prayer-book, with the sincere wish that it may induce him to behave more reverently in church; and, in reminding him that there is such a colour as lavender, hopes that the everlasting lemon kids may be varied!"



Capt. Mayne Reid.
(1863.)
(From an oil Painting.)

This was accompanied by an infinitesimal prayer-book and a pair of lavender cotton gloves. The vicar also presented him with a large Church Service. So the author's "spiritual welfare" was well looked after at this time.

One of the humbler members of the congregation—a labouring man—had also noticed the non-use of a prayer-book by the Captain, and thus accosted him one day: "Oh, sir, I see you don't require no book; you be a scholard." The poor man evidently thought he knew it all by heart!

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Mayne Reid now made a new departure in literature. Instead of taking his readers to the prairies of America, they were transferred to the peaceful lanes and woods of Buckinghamshire, England, though, to introduce an element of strife, the scene is laid in the time of Charles I. But the author was equal to the occasion, and in his new work, the "White Gauntlet"—a historical novel—we find some of his most romantic love scenes, while in Captain Scarthe we have a villain equal to any others drawn by his pen.

The "Ocean Waifs," a sea tale, was published in the *Boys' Journal* in 1863. This was followed, a year later, by the "Boy Slaves," in the same publication.

After an interval of six years, Mayne Reid now satisfied his boy readers as to the fate of Karl and

Casper, in the "Plant Hunters," in a sequel to it, entitled the "Cliff Climbers."

His next boys' book was called "Afloat in the Forest." It made its appearance in the *Boys' Journal* in the year 1865. The story relates to South America, and it should be numbered among the author's best efforts for the youth of the land, not only as an entertaining story, but for its instructiveness. "Afloat in the Forest" was also published in *Our Young Folks' Magazine*, Boston, Mass., in 1866. Many readers of that serial, now grown to manhood, will remember the pleasure and profit it gave them.

The "Guerilla Chief," and several other short tales of adventure, were also produced about this time. In fact, Mayne Reid was now leading an especially busy life, even for him, for in addition to his arduous literary labours he had been for some time occupied in amateur buildings, brick-making, and a variety of occupations, even running an omnibus between Gerrard's Cross and Uxbridge railway-station.

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The year 1865 ushered in the thrilling romance entitled the "Headless Horseman; a Strange Tale of Texas." It was first published in monthly parts, by Chapman & Hall, London. De Witt, New York, presented it to the American people.

Many regard this absorbing romance as Mayne Reid's masterpiece, and in various features it certainly deserves the distinction. Its great popularity war-

ranted its translation into many languages. In Russia alone its circulation is officially stated to exceed any other work by an English author.

On the first appearance of the monthly parts, large coloured lithographs were to be seen at all railway stations, and book and news stores in London and other places, representing a handsome black horse bearing on his back a rider who was clothed in a Mexican striped blanket, booted and spurred—all complete but the *head*, which was entirely missing!

During the publication of the romance, the author had the following injunction inserted in the newspapers :—

"With your permission, I beg leave to intimate to all theatrical managers that it must be 'hands off' with the 'Headless Horseman.' This silent gentleman has yet many months of weary wandering before him, many journeyings through prairie and chaparral, many perils by flood and field; and until these be passed, it is hoped that no unhallowed hand will be laid on his bridle-rein."

Many were the conjectures regarding the secrets of the strange rider, and the author was frequently entreated by his friends to satisfy their curiosity. This he refused to do, however, except in monthly instalments.

As stated in former chapters, Mayne Reid was a daring and accomplished horseman. During his residence at Gerrard's Cross, and other rural

places, he was the owner of one or more spirited saddle-horses. While writing the "Headless Horseman," the author—for inspiration as well as diversion—would almost daily mount a fiery black horse, and gallop with headlong speed about the thinly settled country. In these wild rides, level tracts and deep forests were traversed—some reminder of prairie and chaparral—at times varied by ascending a steep and narrow trail, offering scarce a foothold, leading to some old quarry pits. On one side of this trail was a gorge resembling a miniature *barranca*.

Thus Mayne Reid in fancy once more roamed over the trackless prairies and virgin forests of the South-Western United States, once more he mingled with the hunter and the mustanger. And it is not surprising that on returning home to his study, the author was enabled to infuse into his story much of the life and realism thus recalled.

The title, "Headless Horseman," might cause some people, who are unacquainted with the works of the author, to imagine that it contains little of interest or real value aside from the story. Such a thought, however, would be far from the truth. A perusal of its pages will convince the reader that few romances ever embraced a greater variety of instructive matter interwoven with a plot. A few, indeed, will begrudge the numerous and skilfully arranged digressions; among others, a description of frontier life and citizenship in Texas in the early days, the military

fort with its bronzed troopers, the "hotel" or public tavern, the trial by Judge Lynch, the boundless prairies; and, far from least interesting, the graphic pen-pictures of the noble wild horse, or mustang, in his limitless prairie home, as well as his capture and taming;—all delineated with that vivid detail and fidelity which none fail to recognise as true to life, and founded upon actual experience.

Mayne Reid had a style peculiarly his own. In his off-hand, dashing way he carried the reader along with him, so to speak. His pen was magnetic, and one often forgot that he was *reading*, and became so absorbed in the narative that he imagined himself a spectator of the incident described. The "Headless Horseman" possesses this rare charm to a marked degree.

Mayne Reid's longing for the old scenes, which had left such a deep impression on his mind, is indicated in the following passage from the "Headless Horseman." Referring to "a pleasure perhaps not surpassed upon earth," he says:—

"You may talk of the tranquil joys of the domestic hearth. At times, upon the prairie, I have myself thought of, and longed to return to them. But now, looking back upon both and comparing them, one with the other, I cannot help exclaiming: 'Give me the circle of the camp-fire, with a half dozen of my hunter comrades around it —once again give me that, and be welcome to the

wealth I have accumulated, and the trivial honours I have gained—thrice welcome to the care and toil that must still be exerted in retaining them.'"

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While reading the proofs received from the publishers of the "Headless Horseman," Mayne Reid was revising for book publication a Mexican romance entitled "The Bandolero: or, A Mountain Marriage," which he had originally written for the *Queen* newspaper.

Mayne Reid was now at the zenith of his fame and fortune. He was becoming quite a landed proprietor at Gerrard's Cross. In addition to the two houses which he had owned since 1857, he had bought a ninety years' lease of meadow land adjoining, on which to erect himself a house after his own heart. He also purchased some freehold land, which he intended utilising, as clay was found upon it.

On the twenty acres of leasehold land, Mayne Reid completed the building of a house, in the year 1866, after the style of a Mexican *häcienda*. This dwelling —in strange contrast to anything in the country—he called "The Ranche"[1]—the same name which he had given his former residence. He said people would come to grief over the pronunciation of the proper name—*häcienda*.

About this time a deputation waited upon Mayne Reid at "The Ranche" asking him to stand for Parlia-

[1] From the Spanish, *rancho*.

le View of "Ranche," built by Capt. Mayne Reid in 1865-6.

ment at the next general election—of course, on the Liberal side—and as Mayne Reid was universally popular with the Liberals and the working classes he would have stood a fair chance of election for the county. But ere the said general election took place the gallant soldier-author had entered upon another phase of his eventful career.

CHAPTER XV

Reminiscences by Charles Ollivant—Description of "The Ranche"—Builds several Cottages in the Village.

MAYNE REID possessed many ardent admirers amongst his boy-readers—both of England and America—and the author's desk was often flooded with correspondence from his young friends expressing in strong language their admiration, and begging for a photograph of their hero.

But, amongst all, none was more devoted in their attachment to the author than young Charles Ollivant, a son of Mr. George B. Ollivant of Manchester, and Charles ever after remained a true and devoted friend of Mayne Reid.

Young Ollivant, like thousands of others, the world over, had learned to admire Mayne Reid through his writings, which led to a great desire to know him personally. He finally wrote the author a letter, in 1865, from his father's home in Sale, Cheshire, and soon after received a kindly reply, accompanied by a photograph of the writer. Several other letters passed between them during this year. In July of the following year, Mr. Ollivant, being on

a visit to London, says he "decided, without any formal announcement, to call upon his author friend." He accordingly took a train for Uxbridge, and completed his journey—four miles—to "The Ranche" on foot.

Mr. Ollivant has kindly prepared for this work some personal reminiscences of Mayne Reid, of which the following are extracts from an account of his first visit to the author:—

"On arriving at the place and inquiring for 'Captain Mayne Reid,' I was told that he was not at home, having gone out on the common which abuts on the village of Gerrard's Cross. Preferring to be in the open air to waiting indoors, I retraced my steps along the drive, and strolled on to the common. I traversed it for some distance, but was unsuccessful in meeting with the object of my search, and finally gave it up.

"The day was excessively warm—indeed, sultry to a degree—and feeling rather tired after my uphill walk from Uxbridge, I lay down upon the purple heather, which thickly carpeted the common, and, with my hat tilted over my eyes, soon lapsed into a kind of reverie between sleeping and waking.

"I remained thus for several minutes, and was fast yielding to the drowsy god, when I was suddenly aroused by a voice inquiring: 'Are you tired, my young friend?' Hastily tossing aside my hat I beheld a gentleman standing before me attired in a light tweed suit, the coat of which had a belt round the waist, being what is known as a 'Norfolk jacket.'

In his right hand he held a silver-headed malacca cane. He was slightly over the middle height, of erect military bearing, his hair black and worn rather long, with a heavy moustache and imperial. His eyes were dark hazel, nose medium-sized and straight, with a small mouth and rather prominent chin. Altogether, he possessed a face of that square outline which is usually considered indicative of a determined and daring nature.

"In this striking figure I at once recognised the ideal of my boyhood—often pictured to my imagination—Captain Mayne Reid. I knew him from the photograph he had sent me. On mentioning my name, he grasped my hand warmly, and taking my arm in his we walked together across the common to his house, he talking all the way in that fascinating manner which made him so popular among those who were fortunate enough to be honoured with his acquaintance.

"Need I say that I was delighted? To my youthful ardour, the ambition of my life seemed at length attained: to talk face to face with my favourite author. And I found him no dry bookworm of the closet, but a practical and warm-hearted man, who *talked like his books*.

"We soon reached our destination, when the promised introduction to his young wife—who had just returned from London—was made. How well I remember her as she entered the room, with a light and graceful step! Her complexion fair, with hair that rippled lightly from a low, white forehead, and worn in the simplest fashion. Eyes that glanced softly beneath eyebrows delicately pencilled and

truly arched. Her slim figure, slightly below the medium height, was set off to advantage in a dress of pale blue cashmere, which suited admirably her blonde style of beauty.

"As her husband gave my name, adding the words, 'My wife,' she extended her hand, and with a pleasant smile bade me welcome to 'The Ranche.' The house had only quite recently been completed, they having entered upon occupation about a month previously."

A brief description of this unique residence, by the graphic pen of Charles Ollivant, will no doubt prove of interest to the reader. Mr. Ollivant continues:—

"The house was set back about a quarter of a mile from the turnpike road, where two handsome dome-shaped lodges, each surmounted by a golden eagle, had been erected. They were built of brick, like the house, and then stuccoed with Portland cement—the brick being made by the author in his own kilns. The gate-posts were made to match, the gates themselves of wood, painted a light green, which contrasted well with the greyish white of the lodges. A wide carriage-drive swept thence straight toward the house, bordered with green-sward and shrubbery. When about fifty yards off, it forked to the right and left, embracing a large circular fish-pond, joining again before the hall door, where it formed a fine carriage sweep. The walk then branched in the same manner to the stables at the back, encircling the

house; thus forming a figure eight, the fish-pond and house being inside the two loops.

"This walk was specially designed by Mayne Reid, whose brain was at all times fertile in novel expedients. It enabled a vehicle to approach the house and return without once turning in its tracks, or to continue on to the stables in the rear—a manifest advantage.

"The house itself, seen in the distance, presented an unusually picturesque appearance—quite unlike anything ever seen in England. Like the lodges, it was a grey white, being cemented as they were, and formed a solid square of two storeys. The roof was flat, and surrounded on all sides by balustrades made of cement on a new plan invented by Mayne Reid. In the centre rose a small dome, with doorway, whence the roof could be reached from the inside by a spiral staircase. On each side of this was a low, oblong tower, also surrounded with balustrades, but of a smaller size than those which surrounded the roof of the house. In fact, they were intended to represent the house in miniature.

"Those hideous excrescences, chimneys, were noticeable by their absence. While the house was in course of construction, Mayne Reid told me that he had many a joke with his neighbours about this, leading them to infer that he intended to consume his own smoke. Not until its completion was the mystery solved; when it was discovered, from the smoke seen ascending therefrom, that all the chimney flues were conducted into these handsome-looking towers; and only by this means could it be told that *they* served the purpose of chimneys. . . .

The Lodge Gates at Capt. Mayne Reid's "Ranche," Gerrard's Cross, built by him in 1865-6.

"Entering the spacious hall, the staircase was in the centre, a passage on each side leading to the back premises. The four lower rooms projected on each side, the flat roofs of which, also guarded with balustrades, formed pleasant lounging places on a fine day, being entered from the low casement windows of bedrooms above. I occupied one of these during my stay.

"The room adjoining this was occupied by the author as his study; and, when the weather permitted, he had his chair and table carried outside, on the lead floor of the roof, so that he could pursue his literary work in the open air. Here I spent many happy hours with him. . . .

"I found Mayne Reid to fulfil my highest expectations—a man full of life and energy, able and willing to converse eloquently on any topic which interested him; and showing an insight into human nature rarely to be met with, which made him a most fascinating *raconteur*.

"Part of each day he spent on his estate of some twenty acres, superintending his workmen, then putting the finishing touches to his house. Besides this, in the village of Gerrard's Cross he was erecting a row of eight or ten model cottages, built on the same plan as his own house, with flat roofs, but of plain red brick. . . ."

Mr. Ollivant remained a delighted guest at "The Ranche" for about one week, and then departed for London, accompanied by Mayne Reid, who had business with his publishers in the city. Arriving at

their destination, they lunched at the latter's favourite restaurant, in Regent Street, and then bade each other farewell.

"Thus ended," says Charles Ollivant, "my earliest personal acquaintance with Mayne Reid, which, thus romantically begun, rapidly developed into a warm and enduring friendship, extending without break for seventeen years—to the day of his death."

The Little Times.

NUMBER 3. LONDON, TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 1867. PRICE 1d.

BIRTHS.

On the 27th inst., at 37th, Strand, London, the TIMES of a LITTLE TIMES.

MARRIAGES.

On the 25th inst., at Brussels, Peggy to Mary Hemmings-to-Eglantyne. No cards.

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CHAPTER XVI

His own Brickmaker and Architect—Superintending his Workmen—Bankruptcy—Again takes up his Residence in London—Praiseworthy Efforts of Charles Ollivant—A Prominent Admirer—The *Little Times*—An Amusing Anecdote—Discontinuance of the Paper—The "Finger of Fate"—Mrs. Reid wins a Law-Suit—Various Productions.

AS before mentioned, Mayne Reid made his own bricks, employing a regular force of brickmakers; he was also his own architect. During the construction of his "Ranche," he was up at six o'clock every morning to look after the workmen; and woe betide any who were the least negligent in their duties. The author's voice would be heard afar off, and one might fancy that he was again storming Chapultepec, or that a band of his wild Indians on the war-path had suddenly invaded the quiet village! It is no exaggeration to say that at such times his voice, which was often likened to a trumpet, could be heard a mile away.

This unfortunate mania for building, combined with other failures, finally ended disastrously, and Mayne Reid had to give up to his creditors the

beautiful country home and other properties, on which, as he said, "I had set my heart." Everything was given up, the author wishing "to have no stain affixed to his name for enemies to point at."

After such a conflict few men would be able to raise themselves up again. But the indomitable spirit born in Mayne Reid was not easily cowed. He set himself resolutely to work, and made an effort to pay off his creditors. With spirit undaunted, he again took up his residence in London about the end of the year 1866. He shortly after resolved upon a new enterprise—an evening newspaper at the price of one penny. This enterprise, it was believed by many men of influence, would have been carried to an ultimate success if there had only been plenty of money to back it—the *one* thing needful, and the hardest to obtain.

Prior to this new undertaking of Mayne Reid, his young friend, Charles Ollivant, proved himself a friend in need, by organising a committee for the relief of his author friend. The latter having refused to receive gratuitous aid, the committee adopted the somewhat novel plan of increasing the sales of the "Headless Horseman" among the admirers of Mayne Reid's works.

Mr. Ollivant devoted much time and hard work in Manchester, his native city, and elsewhere, to secure as many purchasers of the book as possible. "I am glad to say," writes this gentleman, "that my

efforts were not fruitless; and, as Mayne Reid wrote me, the amount thus realised was 'a good help toward my assets.' Among the subscribers was honest John Bright, and the honourable President of the Cobden Club, Thomas Bayley Potter, both taking two copies. When I called upon the latter gentleman, he pointed with pride to long rows of books on his shelves bearing the name of 'Captain Mayne Reid,' exclaiming, 'My favourite author!'" The price of the book was 12s.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile Mayne Reid was now busy with his pen in earnest, and finally on Saturday, April 27, 1867, there appeared on the streets of London the first number of a new penny evening journal, called the *Little Times*. It was an almost exact counterpart of the *Times* in miniature. The paper contained eight pages, 9½ by 12 inches in size, three columns wide. We give here a fac-simile.[1]

This was Mayne Reid's latest venture, and a great undertaking it proved, even for one possessed of his uncommon energy; for he not only wrote the editorials and the matter for the feuilleton,[2] but carried on his regular literary work at the same time.

The *Little Times* was a bright and newsy journal, ably edited, and withal very attractive. In the

[1] *See* Appendix.

[2] Part devoted to tales and other entertaining matter.

publishers' column, among other announcements, were the following:—

"The *Little Times* will be published daily as soon as possible after the receipt of the morning mails and telegrams. . . . About the political leaning of the *Little Times* nothing need here be said. Its spirit and proclivities will soon be discovered. . . . No quack or immoral advertisements will be admitted into its columns. . . . The terms for advertising will be one penny per word. . . ."

The issue of May 21 contained the announcement that on May 28 would be commenced in the columns of the paper a new romance by Mayne Reid, entitled the "White Squaw," a sequel to the famous "Scalp Hunters." Before the date mentioned, however, the editor was reluctantly compelled to abandon his newspaper venture for want of funds to carry on the business, also from failing health due to the strain of night and day work.[1]

. . . . . .

After resting awhile, Mayne Reid wrote the "Finger of Fate," the first instalment of which appeared in the *Boys' Own Magazine*, December, 1867. The proprietor of the *Fireside Companion*, New York, paid the sum of $5,000 for the right to run this romance in his paper. The "Finger of Fate" has since (in 1885) earned a fame its author

[1] Mayne Reid afterwards wrote a tale called the "White Squaw," but it was not the projected sequel.

never anticipated for it, Mrs. Reid, his widow, having had to defend her rights—and that successfully—in the Chancery Division of the Royal Courts of Justice, London, against an infringement of the copyright. A leader in the *Times* was devoted to the subject. By a curious coincidence, the last chapter in the book ends with a trial in favour of the plaintiff.

About the same time Mayne Reid had a short serial story, called the "Fatal Cord," running in the *Boys of England Journal*, and had also engaged to write the "Planter Pirate," another short serial, for the same publication. Besides, he was also contributing letters to Forney's *Weekly Press*, Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XVII

Returns to America—Settles at Newport, R.I.—Plunges into Literary Work — Contemplates establishing a Youths' Magazine—Moves to New York—Takes out Naturalisation Papers—Donation of Le Grand Lockwood—Sends for Charles Ollivant—Mr. Ollivant installed as Private Secretary—Appearance of *Onward Magazine* — Interesting Contents — Defends General Grant—Importance of Free Schools.

IN October, 1867, Mayne Reid and his wife left England for America. The author, after his vicissitudes of fortune, had a longing to visit old scenes. They sailed from Liverpool for New York about the middle of the month, and arrived at Newport, R.I., their ultimate destination, on the 8th of November, where they rented a furnished cottage for the winter.

Soon after his arrival, Mayne Reid was eagerly sought by different publishers, who wished to secure his name and productions for their journals. At Newport he wrote the "Child-Wife," many of the scenes and incidents in which work were founded upon his own romantic courtship. The story first appeared in one of Frank Leslie's publications in 1868, for which the author received the handsome

sum of $8,000. It was published in London in three volumes by Ward, Lock, & Tyler. Several short stories were also produced at this place. In fact, the author had as much work for his facile pen as he could well handle.

Mayne Reid had for some time contemplated the establishment in New York City of a boys' monthly magazine of his own. With this object in view he moved to that place in April, 1868. On the 12th of the following month he took out naturalisation papers in the Court of Common Pleas, New York, and became a citizen of the country he loved so well.

It is due to the memory of this sincere friend of American youth, that his new efforts in their behalf should receive full notice in these pages, especially since the comparatively short life of the magazine did not grant it an extensive circle of readers.

Learning of Mayne Reid's undertaking, the well-known banker and philanthropist, Le Grand Lockwood, of Connecticut (since deceased), generously placed the sum of $5,000 at his disposal, without any restrictions whatever, to help along the project.

The author now sent for Charles Ollivant to join him. Mr. Ollivant informs us that he "embarked from Liverpool, October 14, 1868, in the Inman steamer *City of Boston*, that ill-fated boat which, leaving New York in February, 1869, was never heard of from that day to this, every soul having perished in some unknown catastrophe! I landed

on American soil on the 28th of the month, receiving a warm welcome from Mayne Reid, who met me at Castle Garden. . . . We at once drove to his home in Union Square, where I was formally installed as his private and confidential secretary."

About the middle of December, the initial (January) number of the new publication made its appearance. Its full title was, "Mayne Reid's Magazine *Onward*, for the Youth of America." It was beautifully printed and illustrated; the covers contained the title and an attractive design in colours. The first number was published by Carleton, but the editor afterwards opened an office at 119 Nassau Street, and published the magazine himself. The expenses were greatly reduced by this change, but the labour and responsibility increased. The entire management of the office devolved upon Mr. Ollivant. The noble purpose of the magazine is indicated in the following extract from the prospectus:—

"'Onward' along the track of civilisation—on towards goodness and glory—a finger-post pointing to all that is worthy of attainment—a guide to conduct the youth of America along that path leading to the highest and noblest manhood: such is the design of 'Mayne Reid's Magazine.' And it is meant for the youth of America—they who in a few short years will hold as in the hollow of their hand the destinies not only of America, but of mankind."

The subscription price of the magazine was two dollars per year, or thirty cents per single copy. Every number was made up from original matter, of the most entertaining and wholesome character, embracing articles on travel and adventure, natural history, serial stories, poems, games, etc., presented to the reader in the charming style of its famous editor.

One of the attractive features of *Onward* was a department under the heading, "Things Worth Thinking About," in which the editor discussed topics of the times, and often advocated needed reforms. He espoused the cause of the Indian, whom he knew so well, telling how shamefully he had been treated, and suggesting means for improving his condition. He strongly urged the establishment of a zoological garden; and the menagerie in Central Park, New York, is the result, in a measure, of Mayne Reid's efforts.

He advocated the stoppage of street cars at certain regular distances, not only for the purpose of accelerating the speed, but also to prevent the terrible strain on the horses induced by the frequent starting and stopping.

Mayne Reid also had an article on this subject in the *New York Herald* of October 11, 1869. He proposed that the cars should be stopped at every fourth block, truly claiming that the time was "idly wasted by the frequent stoppings—little, if any, less

than one-half the whole period required for the trip or journey. It is toil to the driver, trouble to the conductor, discomfort to the passengers, and death to the horses. To the last it is especially trying; for on the iron rail it is not the pace that kills, but the oft-repeated starting and stopping that wring the withers of the dumb brute and strain every muscle of his body almost to breaking. . . . "

President U. S. Grant was thus defended by Mayne Reid in *Onward*, in the year 1869:—

"The nation will do well to suspend its judgment upon a question about which its newspaper press has been, perhaps, too querulous. We speak of the conduct of its chief magistrate, General Grant. He has been accused of not being busy enough—in other words, that he spends his time in idle frivolities, neglecting the duties of his office. It is easy to make this accusation, and it would seem easy to support it; at least, so think his accusers. For proof they point to his pilgrimages, and say that he should stay at home. But why? Would his thoughts be any clearer—even with the cigar between his teeth—in the White House at Washington than on the beach at Long Branch? Or his conceptions any more accurate? Or his acts and doings better ordered?

"Of his sayings no one can make much, and maybe so much the better. And of his doings, perhaps the time has not yet come to make them manifest. But we, for our part, have a presentiment that it is near at hand, and that this silent president will soon

prove to his over-impatient people that his reticenc has reason, and his speech will give them all th more pleasure when he utters it. It will be a word about the financial condition of the country—a word giving joy to some, and to all contentment. *Verbum sap.*"

In the number for July, 1869, at which time France "was groaning under the corrupt rule of Louis Napoleon," Mayne Reid thus expressed himself:—

"'Give me the making of a people's songs,' says Béranger, 'and I shall shape their destiny.' So also said Dibdin of England. Both have had their opportunity, and both have failed. Despite the soul-stirring strains of Béranger, his countrymen are grovelling under an ignominious despotism: while Dibdin's noble tar is the same old drunken sailor of Bugle Alley and Ratcliffe Highway. Yet for all this there is no braver 'son of a gun' on earth than that same 'Jack Tar.' So, 'Heigho for Bugle Alley,' say I.

"No; you cannot shape the destiny of a people with songs, nor direct it with ditties. Under a despotism these will not hinder its downward course; and if you desire it to go upward and 'onward' there is but one elevator—the Republic, and one ally that can truly and effectually aid it—*the school.*"

CHAPTER XVIII

Onward Continued—The "Purple Swallow"—A Wonderful Literary Feat—Press Notices of *Onward*—Last Words of the Editor—Reminiscences by Charles Ollivant—Failure of the Magazine—Ill-Health.

Onward for January, 1870, contained the first part of a serial poem by Mayne Reid, entitled "The Purple Swallow; or, Two Loves in a Life." A brief synopsis of this beautiful poem, or of the plot, will not be out of place here, especially since part of the work is still in unpublished manuscript.

In the opening verses the hero relates his intense love for, and the angelic beauty of, his newly-wedded bride. On the first day of the honeymoon the bride meets with an accidental death, leaving the husband frantic with grief.

At this point the published part of the poem ends. For reasons which will soon be apparent to the reader it was not continued. Enough was found in manuscript form, however, on the death of the author, to disclose a most original and affecting plot throughout, although the work was never entirely completed.

From the unpublished part we learn that the

bereaved husband, in his ravings, imagined that the purple swallow could carry messages to his lost one. He accordingly writes a letter addressed to her, and attaches it to one of the birds on its departure for the South in the autumn. Instead of taking the letter to the dead Agläe, the swallow carries it to a beautiful lady in Cuba. The lady replies to the missive by the same carrier on its return North in the spring. This correspondence is kept up for some time, until finally they meet, and thus the second love is formed.

About fifteen hundred lines were completed. It should be stated that the poem was composed on both sides of the Atlantic, and at different periods. That portion relating to the death of the bride—Chant the Second—was written in 1846, and published under another title. The prologue was written in England in the year 1863, and reads as follows:—

"Away o'er the waves of the rolling Atlantic,
Afar amidst forests vierge and primeval,
Where objects of Nature, Titanic, gigantic,
Tell of times with the birth of our planet coeval,
Lies the land for which ever my spirit shall long—
A land where the mountains soar up to the snow
From the plains that seem bounded alone by the sky—
Where rivers resemble the ocean in flow
In their flood, as when tempest has toss'd it on high;
A land to whose every-day annals belong
Some theme, or some thought, that is worthy of song;
Where hearts, in the vigour of manhood rebelling,
'Gainst counsel of sages and axioms hoary,
Give way but to impulse; where bosoms high swelling
Throb wildly with visions of love or of glory;

Where beauty illumines the lowliest dwelling,
As bright as the brightest recorded in story;
A land of loves lasting, of hates deep and strong,
Inspiring to actions of virtue sublime,
Disposing to deeds of the deadliest crime;
A land where commingle the curs'd and the blest;
Where the oath and the promise, the prayer and the wail,
By night, as by day, may be heard on the gale.
Need I say that I speak of the Land of the West?
Need I tell you that there lies the scene of my tale?"

. . . . . .

For the first three months Mayne Reid furnished the entire table of contents for his magazine, with the exception of two or three poems and articles of prose, from his own prolific pen. The magnitude of this feat may be imagined when it is stated that the first number contained eighty-six ordinary magazine pages of reading matter, and the second ninety-four pages. There was great variety, too, in these initial numbers, fully equal to any that followed. It may well be doubted whether such a feat has ever been equalled by an editor.

Onward received universal praise from the public as well as the entire press of the country. A few extracts from New York papers are subjoined:—

"With its fresh look . . . and last, but not least, its noble ideas and enthusiasm in favour of free institutions, it cannot fail to win success as well as deserve it."

"It has the characteristic merits of its well-known editor, whose suggestions are generally founded on good sense, good morals, and an honourable philosophy."

"It will arouse noble and intelligent emulation among those who must soon govern our country."

"It is all that could be desired."

"It has no rival in the field."

In the last number of the magazine, an article appeared in the publisher's department under the heading, "A Magazine Mystery," in which its faithful editor vainly tried to account for the failure of the public to support it. After speaking of the time and money devoted to the work, this eloquent paragraph occurs:

"But we can sincerely declare that the regret of our money loss is not near so great as that forced upon us by certain other considerations. In this age of mammon-worship, it may seem sheer hypocrisy to say that we would not exchange the credit of one good or noble deed for all the property America possesses. In solemnity we say it. We do not make this boast either to defy the sneer of the plutocrat or court the sympathy of the humane. It is a thought thrown out to those for whom the teachings of *Onward* were intended—a last word thrown out to those to sustain them in the faith it tried to inculcate: that there are, even in this frivolous world, greater glories, and grander luxuries, than wealth can ever give. The richest man, if he be not a *gentleman*, is but poor

in comparison with the pauper who is; and the time may yet come when not only will the world think him so, but he himself *feel* it—if he do not now."

Following this were the opinions of 880 American journals, representing thirty-six states, all warmly in praise of *Onward*. These were published for the purpose of proving that the magazine had not failed for lack of appreciation by the press.

. . . . . .

The following interesting particulars, relating to *Onward*, and the large amount of additional literary work performed by its editor during its publication, is from the pen of Charles Ollivant:

"Sojourning at No. 33 Union Square, New York, during the spring of 1869, Mayne Reid spent the summer and fall in Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn. During this period, his literary labours were of the most arduous character in connection with his magazine venture. Besides writing many articles and continued stories for its pages, in the month of May, 1869, he made an engagement with Robert Bonner, proprietor of the *New York Ledger*, to write for that weekly a new tale, the price of which was fixed at $3,000, for the right of publication in America only. In the midst of the heavy duties connected with the editorship of *Onward*, this tale was written in less than three months—a literary feat almost without parallel. The title of the work was the 'Free Lances; a Romance of the Mexican Valley.' But Mr. Bonner preferred to call it 'Cris Rock; or, a

Lover in Chains,' under which name it appeared in the *Ledger* ten years later. The book, however, is known to the reading public by the former, and decidedly the most appropriate, title.

"Mayne Reid was greatly harassed and worried financially, finding the expenses of publishing *Onward* a very severe strain, as its sales were still comparatively small, owing to the much-needed want of liberal advertising. All the proceeds from the 'Free Lances' were devoted to the paper and printing of the magazine, with other incidental expenses which had to be provided for. He still, however, kept up a good heart, and hoped eventually to make the magazine a financial success.

"Late in the autumn of 1869, Mayne Reid returned to New York, taking up his abode in East Eighty-fourth Street, where he remained throughout the winter. It was while residing here that he wrote another story for Street & Smith, proprietors of the *New York Weekly*, the now well-known 'Lone Ranch,' for which he was paid $2,000 for serial publication in America.

"Previous to this the author had entirely rewritten his 'Treatise on Croquet,' which, first running through his magazine, he afterwards published in book form from his own office. He also made an agreement with a toy manufacturer in New York, named Williams, for the manufacture of the correct implements to play this, at that time, fashionable out-door game.

"Besides the 'Lone Ranch,' Mayne Reid wrote this winter a boys' tale for Frank Leslie's *Boys' and Girls' Weekly*. It ran through that journal under the title of the 'Red Gorilla,' the scene being laid in

the great Island of Borneo. This title was afterwards changed; and it is now known as 'The Castaways.' Mr. Leslie paid $3,000 for this juvenile work. These two sums were also swallowed up in the magazine.

"However, I need not dwell upon this painful period of Mayne Reid's life. Suffice it to say that on the publication of the fourteenth number, for February, 1870, being the second number of Vol. II., *Onward* ceased to appear. The principal reason for this failure was lack of funds to carry on the magazine; for, in spite of Mayne Reid's herculean labours, these at last became exhausted. His health, too, succumbed under this terrible mental strain, and he was finally compelled to give up the magazine upon which he had set his heart."

CHAPTER XIX

Invited to Lecture on Lord Byron—Invitation accepted, and Steinway Hall engaged—Newspapers prominently announce the Lecture—"Byron: As a Man, as a Republican, as a Poet"—*New York Herald's* Report of the Lecture.

IN March, 1870, Mayne Reid received an "urgent and honourable invitation, such as rarely greets a lecturer on literary topics,"[1] to deliver a lecture on Lord Byron. The invitation—dated on the 22nd of the month—was signed by one hundred and twenty-two of the most eminent citizens of New York City, among the number being the venerable poet, William Cullen Bryant. This movement resulted from the appearance of a highly-popular and widely-quoted article in *Onward* written by Mayne Reid in defence of Byron, whose memory had been assailed by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The invitation was accepted, and a committee engaged Steinway Hall for the gathering. The coming event was prominently announced by the

[1] New York *Home Journal.*

city papers, which spoke in warm terms of the late editor of *Onward*.

"To hear such a man discourse on Byron," said the *Sun*, "must be a rare entertainment."

The *Herald* said:

"Captain Mayne Reid was intimate with many of the most intimate friends of Byron. He knew them in their clubs and in their most vivacious moments, and hence is well qualified to talk understandingly upon the subject. The curiosity of seeing a gentleman so well known in the annals of literature as Mayne Reid will not excel the interest that has accumulated around the name of Byron by the very remarkable developments of a few months past. Let Mayne Reid have a royal audience."

It was a "royal audience," indeed, in both numbers and intelligence, that greeted Mayne Reid on the evening of April 18, and listened in rapt attention and appreciation to an eloquent lecture (delivered without notes of any kind, but which had been previously prepared and memorised) on "Byron: As a Man, as a Republican, as a Poet."

No one present on that memorable occasion will ever forget the pleasure he experienced in listening to the magnetic language of Mayne Reid, as, with all the fire and enthusiasm of his ardent nature, he delivered this remarkable lecture. On the following day the *New York Herald* published the following graphic report of the lecture, under the heading:

"The Illustrious Byron. Captain Mayne Reid's Lecture at Steinway Hall":—

"A fine audience greeted Captain Mayne Reid last evening at Steinway Hall to hear his lecture upon Lord Byron. Though it rained, the unfavourable weather did not prevent the gathering of a brilliant array of fashion and intellect, anxious at once to pay tribute to the revered memory of the English bard, and testify to the esteem and appreciation which the lecturer has inspired in this country, not only by his distinguished literary works, but by the courageous opposition which he so resolutely flung in the teeth of New England Bohemian transcendentalists. The venerable James W. Gerard presided, and upon the stage was the silvered poet Bryant, and the famous naturalist, Professor B. Waterhouse Hawkins. Mr. Gerard, in presenting Captain Mayne Reid, referred to the lecturer's eminent military services, the extraordinary fertility of his mind, and the rippling fluency of his pen. He pointed out the poor reward which by courtesy is styled compensation for literary services, to the struggles which glowing mind has with sordid matter, and the extraordinary ease by which a man can achieve fortune by servitude to politics, but which the lecturer had wisely neglected to do. Captain Mayne Reid then came forward, fashionably attired in light brown pants, closely-buttoned frock-coat, and canary kids.

"He began his discourse by considering the wonderful succession of events which by turns heightened and darkened the history of Europe and America during the bloody days preceding the Reign

of Terror. His address was conceived in the dramatic spirit, and in gesture, personal appearance, pose of body, a careless and therefore an artistic attitude, he threw animation into his delivery, and fire and electricity into his vigorous imagery. Metaphor abounded in the eloquent sentences he employed in speaking of the infant agonies of the young colonies, and his choice of language was exquisite, and the argument and unity of the exordium perfect. Having considered the effect of the terrible events which clouded the skies of empires when Byron was born, he gave some account of the early years of the greatest poet of modern times; of the simple surroundings of his early years; of the tender care of a watchful and loving mother; the sudden stroke of fortune by which George Gordon Byron became a peer of England at the age of eleven years in 1799; of his modesty in his position of greater dignity, and of his youthful aptitude for poesy.

"He then spoke of his personal character, falsely blackened by defamation, and meanly assailed by slander and calumny. He scorched and withered the petty maidens who were delivered of the foulest sensation of modern times—not by invective and denunciation, but—oh, how they would have felt! —by omission. Madame Stowe was not even mentioned.

"He then considered how Lord Byron had exposed the hollowness, falsity, and humbuggery of modern society; how he bled the literary men of their thunder by applying the sharp lancet of his satire; how he offended nations—England, Austria, Russia, Portugal, Italy, and Greece—and therefore stood

against mankind solitary and alone. He gave the memory of that poetical toady and educated parasite, Tom Moore, a few grains of intellectual arsenic, for having been so treacherous to the memory of his great peer; for seconding lies, and allowing the character of a man who had bequeathed him the most honoured task of his life to be cheap in the mouths of his foul traducers. Moore, who sought the halls and the society of the great, had been borne to his grave in a hired hearse without a titled mourner. He gave this faithless and wicked biographer of Byron a deserved rebuke for a breach of trust second only to the outrageous meanness which made Griswold, as Poe's executor, an infamous knave. The separation between Byron and his wife was to save an estate from the bailiff, and Moore's destruction of the 'Memoirs' was influenced by money; it had about it the clink of gold.

"Of Lord Byron's generosity, nobility, manliness, modesty, outspoken manner, the lecturer discoursed eloquently, and was loudly applauded. He entered into no critical analysis of his works, but read copiously from their splendid catalogue. 'There was a sound of revelry by night' was executed with feeling and poetic fervour; but 'Manfred' was the best—the moody cynic standing on the Jungfrau Mountain, about to take the final leap. The grandeur of thought and the exalted expression can be pictured by no living tongue, but as far as this masterpiece of tragedy can be rendered, the portrayal of Captain Mayne Reid was superior. He recited from various poems, and closed with Byron's famous 'Stanzas on the Ocean.'"

CHAPTER XX

Critical Illness—Case pronounced Hopeless—Removal to St. Luke's Hospital—Communication to the *Sun*—Preparations for his Funeral—Obituary Notice prepared—Marvellous Recovery—Interviewed by a Lady Correspondent—A Relapse—Gradual Recovery—Removal from the Hospital—Melancholia—Amusing Incident—Physician advises a Voyage to Europe—Low State of his Finances—Generous Assistance of Friends—Final Farewell to America.

SHORTLY after delivering his lecture upon Lord Byron, Mayne Reid changed his residence from Eighty-fourth to West Twenty-fourth Street. He had scarce got comfortably settled there before the indisposition which had been hanging over him for some time past resolved itself into an illness of the deadliest character, which bade fair, ere long, to remove him to another world.

The complaint resolved itself in the suppuration of the gun-shot wound he received in the left leg, above the knee, at the storming of Chapultepec, during the Mexican War in 1847. This wound had given him trouble ever since that early period of his life; while for the last five or six years

the leg in the region of the wound had been gradually swelling, until it now formed a huge excrescence on the thigh which baffled the best medical skill to diagnose and treat.

"Dr. Wm. Argyle Watson, formerly surgeon in the U. S. Navy, and who had been wounded at the time of the Crimean War, was strangely enough living in the same house in which Captain Mayne Reid had taken rooms, and, more odd still, Dr. Watson had known Mayne Reid when the latter was at Newport, Rhode Island, in the year 1848. Dr. Watson now devoted his medical skill and gave his services gratuitously to the author. He also called in the aid of Dr. Van Buren, a distinguished physician, who unhesitatingly pronounced the case of Mayne Reid a hopeless one, deeming the prolongation of life only a matter of a few weeks at most. Mayne Reid daily grew weaker, the wound, which was kept constantly poulticed and bandaged, running freely. His appetite finally failed him, milk forming his sole aliment and support, a jug being always kept at his bedside. His wife was in constant attendance, and had all the dressings of the wound to attend to. The weather at the time being intensely hot, the malady gradually developed more dangerous symptoms, and as the patient could no longer be attended to in private apartments, it was resolved to remove him to St. Luke's Hospital—Dr. Watson superintending the removal, which took place at the end of June on an excessively hot day. On his

arrival at the hospital the patient was first taken to one of the single beds in the large public ward. He only remained in this room for a few days, when he was removed into a private room.

This change was effected by the liberality of Benjamin Field, of Cortlandt de P. Field & Co., New York, who gave particular instructions to Dr. Muhlenburg, manager of the hospital, that Mayne Reid should receive every care and attention, and depositing with him a sum of money for the present necessities, and holding himself responsible for all further expenses incurred. He also engaged an attendant to wait upon him night and day.

The annual celebration of Independence Day found Mayne Reid lying on a bed of suffering—greatly aggravated by the numerous noises near the hospital, incidental to the day. They brought from his perturbed spirit a strong remonstrance in the form of a letter to the New York *Sun*, published July 7, a rather remarkable epistle, coming from an invalid prostrated as Mayne Reid was then. It was written with all his old spirit, and bore the heading, "Captain Mayne Reid's Fourth. How Dying Men in Hospital Suffer from Fourth of July Celebrations." The letter was as follows :—

"To the Editor of the *Sun*.

"SIR,—I have been for some days an inmate of this hospital, a sufferer from a severe and dangerous

malady. To save my life calls for the highest surgical skill, along with a combination of the most favourable circumstances, among them quiet. And yet during the whole of yesterday and part of the day before (the Lord's Day), the air around me has been resonant with what, in the bitterness of my spirit, I pronounce a *feu d'enfer*. It has resembled an almost continuous fusilade of small arms, at intervals varied by a report like the bursting of a bombshell or the discharge of a cannon. I am told that this infernal fracas proceeds from a row of dwelling-houses in front of the hospital, and that it is caused by the occupants of these dwellings or their children.

"Accustomed in early life to the roar of artillery, my nerves are not easily excited by concussive sounds; and, therefore, I have not seriously been affected by them. But, alas! how different with scores of my fellow-sufferers in the hospital, beside the couch of many of whom Death stands waiting for his victim. I am informed by my nurses—intelligent and experienced men—that they have known several cases where death has not only been hastened but actually caused by the nervous startings and torture inflicted by these Fourth of July exhibitions. I have been also informed that the venerable and philanthropic founder of this valuable institution has done all in his power to have this cruel infliction stayed—even by personal appeal to the inhabitants of the houses in question; and that he has been met by refusal, and the reply, 'We have a right to do as we please on our own premises!' I need not point out the utter falsity of this assumed view of civic rights; but I would remark that the man who, even under the sanction of

long custom and the pretence of country's love, permits his children, through mere wanton sport, to murder annually one or more of his fellow-citizens—I say that such a man is not likely to make out of those children citizens who will be distinguished either for their patriotism or humanity.

"In the name of humanity, I ask you, sir, to call public attention to this great cruelty, and, if possible, have it discontinued.

"Yours very truly,

"MAYNE REID.

"ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL, *July* 5, 1870."

One of the hospital surgeons suggested that Mayne Reid's wounded leg should be amputated above the knee, and the newspapers, hearing of this, commented upon the proposed dangerous operation. In an article on the subject, the *Sun* had this to say:—

"We earnestly hope that he may come safely out of the ordeal. Apart from the literary distinction which he has acquired, Captain Reid is a gentleman of generous and chivalric nature, a man of fine qualities both of heart and head. His loss would be deeply felt in both hemispheres."

The operation was not performed, as it was found, on careful examination, that the poisonous blood proceeding from it would render such an amputation of no avail—even if the patient could survive the operation.

Meantime, the wound continued to discharge, fortunately, however, in lessened degree, and the patient seemed to be in a fair way of recovery, when he was attacked by diarrhœa. Medical skill seemed of no avail, and life was fast ebbing away.

About the 17th of the month, the head surgeon took Mr. Ollivant aside, and informed him that Mayne Reid's friends should be communicated with at once; "for in this tropical weather," said the surgeon, "the body can only be kept for a few hours on ice."

Thus advised, Mr. Ollivant saw the necessity of prompt action. He therefore hastened to the nearest telegraph office, and sent the following message to Mayne Reid's friend, the wealthy banker, Le Grand Lockwood:

"Captain Mayne Reid is dying!"

Early next morning, a gentleman from Mr. Lockwood's bank called at the hospital to make all necessary arrangements for Mayne Reid's funeral. At the suggestion of this gentleman, Mr. Ollivant procured a black dress suit[1] from the author's wardrobe, and took it to the hospital. Then he wrote on slips of paper, ready to send to the newspapers:—

"On the — inst., at St. Luke's Hospital, Captain Mayne Reid, author, in his 53rd year."

[1] A corpse is buried in its wearing apparel in the United States.

For three days Mayne Reid lay in a semi-comatose condition, lingering on the border-land between life and death. To all intents and purposes he was dying, the last mortal signs of disruption and decay being visible on every lineament of his face. He had, besides, the hiccough very badly, its jerking gasps choking nearly every breath he drew. His mind wandered, though, strangely enough, he appeared to recognise his wife and Mr. Ollivant, who were constantly by his bedside during this sad time.

One morning a singular change was perceived in his condition. The hiccough had ceased, and his reason seemed fully restored, and he gradually began to mend. He very soon insisted upon leaving his bed and dressing himself in his clothes, which hung upon him so loosely, it seemed as though they only contained a "clothes-prop" instead of a human figure!

From this date Mayne Reid's recovery was marvellous. The wonderful vitality and recuperative powers which he displayed amazed his medical attendants, who now began to entertain hopes of his ultimate recovery—provided he had no further relapse. But they were not at all sanguine on this score; and their doubts were destined ere long to be amply verified.

. . . . . .

On the 9th of August, Mayne Reid continuing to improve, a lady correspondent of the *Cincinnati Commercial* (Miss Laura Ream) was allowed to see

him, for the purpose of an interview. The result of her visit was published in the *Commercial*, August 24, under the heading, "A Hoosier Adrift." The following are extracts from her letter:—

"My sympathies were enlisted, too, for the brave fellow who has been languishing in St. Luke's Hospital. . . . To find my way, then, to the hospital seemed a part of my pleasure in New York. The gate shut me in with a clang, and I walked up to the main building with, I confess, no little trepidation at my boldness. In answer to the request 'to see Captain Mayne Reid,' I was conducted through a broad hall into a long ward furnished with an infinite number of low, narrow cots, that looked too small for any practical purpose. A turn through a short hall, and what appeared to be an apothecary's closet, brought us to the private room of the author. He was lying upon a bedstead (similar to those in the ward) which was placed in the centre of the apartment. As he turned his head and raised himself upon his elbow to address me, he presented the view of a middle-aged, sturdy-looking English squire.

"The head is compact, and covered with a profusion of dark brown hair, which, in contrast with the pallid complexion, stood out as if it had no part and parcel with the corpse-like whiteness of the scalp. The brow was smooth and fair, rounded out to gigantic proportions by ideality, casuality, and reverence. The nose, nervous and scornful, would have been remarkable but for the large and beautiful eyes, that are restless habitually; but when fixed upon an object

have a lancinating effect, and withal an expression of great good heart, that is seconded by one of the most winning smiles I ever beheld. Hands of uncommon grace and beauty somehow complete the charm of his lips and eyes.

"My pen is cold and feeble to convey the spirit of Captain Mayne Reid's conversation. He certainly possesses all the grace of gesticulation, animated voice, and mesmeric power to ensure a success as a lecturer.

"As we talked, the air coming fresh through the open window, laden with the murmur of leaves and twitter of swallows, a light, even step was heard approaching, and a lady came forward, pausing on the threshold. Oh, but she was fair! with her golden hair caught up under an azure fanchon of satin, and falling in soft ripples over her forehead. There was an expression of firmness in her calm blue eyes which gave character to the face of infantile shape and loveliness. From her face my eye wandered to her figure, struck with admiration at her graceful pose—an accomplishment few women possess. They dance and sometimes walk well, but they rarely know how to stand still. Her gown, I observed, was white, with an overdress or wrap of blue, admirably suited to her peculiar style of beauty.

"'My wife,' said the invalid, and as he explained that I called because I had read his books, she smiled and extended her hand. The smile was like sunshine, and the clasp of her soft, cool hand a positive luxury. The clear and musical voice was in keeping with her beautiful self, and I loitered for a moment to gather a full impression of the scene."

A few days after this "interview" a serious relapse took place; and the condition of Mayne Reid was more hopeless than before. Everything was again prepared for his interment, and telegrams sent to all his friends. His wife was summoned, and was allowed to remain at the hospital during the night, being told by the doctor that any minute might be her husband's last. He had been lying in an unconscious state for the past three days, all the signs of approaching dissolution being present. About eight o'clock on the morning of the 11th he rallied considerably. The doctors and two of the lady nurses were around his bed, when he suddenly raised himself up, exclaiming in a strong voice: "Turn those she-Beelzebubs," pointing to the two ladies, "out of the room at once, preaching at a fellow, and telling him he's going to die. I'm not going to die. Bring me a beef-steak."

Everyone was astounded, the poor chaplain being nearly frightened out of his wits. The beef-steak was speedily brought in, and the patient made a feint of eating a portion.

On the 10th of September, being sufficiently convalescent to bear removal from the hospital, Mayne Reid was taken to his old apartments in West Twenty-fourth Street. He was still very weak, but able to walk for a short distance at a time. While his physical health thus bade fair to be gradually restored, the terrible struggles he had passed through had left him

suffering from a malignant form of melancholia. All this was most trying to his wife, who never left her husband's side—night or day—as he imagined something dreadful would happen to him if his wife was absent.

He would now take singular fancies into his head. One of these was a determination to ascertain daily by his increase in flesh whether he was gaining in health and strength—hence he would insist upon being weighed every day! This was laughable in the extreme, but done it must be, and this strange fancy for getting himself weighed continued for some years after.

One occasion of this kind occurred at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, which abuts on West Twenty-fourth Street. The scales of the weighing machine told him that he had actually added three pounds to his weight of the previous day. This, Mr. Ollivant says, he knew could not be, and he expressed his doubts as to the accuracy of the machine. This irritated Mayne Reid, who had been much pleased to think that he had gained three pounds; but his irritation was changed to mortification when he suddenly put his hand into the tail pocket of his frock-coat and pulled out a parcel of hardware, weighing quite three pounds, which he had a short time before purchased, and slipping into his pocket, had forgotten its existence.

This incident amused Mr. Ollivant so much that he could not resist giving way to laughter, which

highly offended the author, and it was several hours before his equanimity was fully restored and his friend forgiven.

No improvement taking place in the mind of Mayne Reid—instead, his delusions daily increased—a consultation was held by the doctors, who gave it as their opinion that the only chance for Mayne Reid's restoration was to return to his native land; and the sea voyage might have a beneficial effect upon him.

They told Mrs. Reid privately that if her husband remained any longer in the States, he would end his days in a lunatic asylum.

It required some tact and persuasion to get Mayne Reid's consent to go home to Ireland. He naturally shrank from returning to England, or his home, in his then altered circumstances.

His wife wrote to the brother in Ireland, who then occupied the old homestead, of Mayne's serious condition, and that they would shortly sail for home.

But to accomplish this, funds were necessary; as it will be readily understood that the failure of Mayne Reid's magazine, closely followed by his long illness, had left him penniless, and he was now unable to do any work at all. Under these circumstances it was suggested by Dr. Watson to draw up a paper representing these facts, and Charles Ollivant undertook to call upon all the friends of the author in New York for the purpose of raising the needed money.

The result of these praiseworthy efforts was the collection of over six hundred dollars in a brief time. The names of the gentlemen who so generously contributed to Mayne Reid's assistance at this time are as follows :—

Le Grand Lockwood.
Cortlandt de P. Field & Co.
John W. Hamersley.
Dudley Field.
Major-General Joseph Hooker.
James W. Gerard.
Robert Bonner.
J. Watts de Peyster.
James W. Beekman.
William Cullen Bryant.
Judge Charles P. Daly.
L. B. Stone.
Theodore Rooseveldt.

This sum was handed to Mayne Reid's wife, as she had now to keep the purse, and assume all responsibilities.

First-class cabin passage was secured on the s.s. *Siberia*, Cunarder, Mayne Reid having a particular desire to sail with Captain Harrison ; and he finally embarked with his wife on board the *Siberia*, homeward bound.

This was Mayne Reid's last visit to the country of his adoption, and in whose cause he had shed his blood and earned for himself the laurels of war.

CHAPTER XXI

Mrs. Elizabeth Reid's Account of the Homeward Voyage—Arrival in England—Visits Ireland without Benefit—Goes to a Hydropathic Establishment in England—Returns to London for Medical Advice—Happy Result—Extract from a Letter—Resumes Literary Work—A Stirring Political Speech—Powers of Oratory—Asked to Explore the Gulf of California—A Proposition from P. T. Barnum—Again Confined to his Bed—Funeral Arrangements—A "Resurrection"—A Cripple for Life—Literary Work—Removes to Another Locality—Daily Ramble in a Bath-Chair.

"THE events of that memorable homeward voyage of my husband and self, in October of 1870, and the subsequent events immediately following, will never be erased from the memory of the writer of these lines.

"Charles Ollivant and our good friend, Dr. William Argyle Watson, of New York, accompanied us on board the steamer; the latter gave my husband in charge of the ship's doctor, 'Spence,' telling him all the particulars of Mayne Reid's then state of mind and body, and that he required watching.

"The farewells were taken—our friend Charles Ollivant was remaining in New York—and shortly

after the last hand-grasp we were leaving its shores behind us."

Mr. Ollivant thus feelingly refers to this farewell :—

"The date of sailing was October 22. How well I remember my farewell greeting on the deck of the steamer! I did not myself return to England then, being determined to push my fortunes in the West, for I loved America as well as Mayne Reid did, and he no longer needed my services as secretary. The parting was a sad one, for I did not know when we should meet again.

"As I stood upon the wharf and watched the vessel slowly receding in the distance, my grief seemed more than I could bear, and I felt that I was alone indeed."

"There was something weird in the fact that this particular steamship carried only my husband and self and one other man as cabin passengers. The *Siberia* had come from Boston, and was late in her arrival at the port of New York. On this account her intending passengers had sailed in a previous ship.

"And from the kindness which my husband and self received, we might have been supposed to have chartered the whole ship. Even my little Mexican poodle, 'Tottie,' was allowed to accompany her mistress, though it is against the rules to carry dogs on the Cunarders. We were given a cabin on deck, and by Captain Harrison's orders the doctor and first officer were allowed to have sleeping cabins opposite

to our own, as my husband suffered from strange delusions, and was not responsible for his actions."

To a stranger there must have been something pathetic in the sight of a fragile young woman having the sole responsibility on her shoulders of a husband so dependent upon her as was Mayne Reid at that time, and for some period subsequent.

"After a stormy voyage we at length arrived at Queenstown Harbour, where it had been our intention to debark, as being nearer to our goal. But the elements were against us, so we proceeded on to Liverpool. But here the sea was so rough at the bar that the tender could not be got alongside the ship. After futile efforts, finding it impracticable, the first officer lifted me in his arms, jumping overboard on to the tender. A sailor performed the same office for my husband and the other passenger. Tottie, of course, was included.

"The following day we re-embarked on board a steamer from Liverpool to Belfast.

"The voyage had done Mayne Reid some little good, but he was like a child, not fit to walk alone. And now once more he set foot on the shores of his native land—his home. But no welcome awaited the man returning bankrupt in health and pocket, such as had been accorded to the hero fresh from the wounds of war!

"The old homestead where Mayne Reid was born still remained, but how changed its inmates! That

old homestead has now vanished, and a new edifice of modern structure stands in its stead.

"During our brief sojourn in Ireland—for the unrest of Mayne Reid's spirit required constant change—we were hospitably entertained at the house of my husband's brother-in-law, the Rev. T. Cromie, of Armagh. And here Mayne Reid was advised to try the Water Cure Establishment of Smedley's, at Matlock, Derbyshire. So once more we embarked on a stormy sea. Mayne Reid 'beheld the hills of his native land sink behind the black waves,' and *never* did see them again.

"We had arrived in Ireland in November, 1870, and the following month found us at Smedley's Asylum, for I can call it by no other name as it then existed, at Matlock, Derbyshire.

"Never can I forget the feelings of dismay, almost of terror, which took possession of my senses, as well as those of my invalid husband, on our first entry into Smedley's Hydro on that dark December day. 'All hope abandon ye who enter here' seemed to be written on its portal.

"The room allotted to us contained two hard-looking, uninviting couches, on which we were supposed to seek repose. Two wooden chairs, and a sofa covered in black, a deal dressing-table, wash-stand, and chest of drawers composed the furniture, while the fireplace was utterly black, being a kind of stove, with no fire visible. There was no bell in the room, such a thing being considered superfluous.

"Watching the look of dismay on my husband's face as his gaze rested on the funereal-looking sofa, I endeavoured to appear cheerful.

"Passing out of the dining-hall after dinner into the adjoining room, we saw some of our fellow-companions reclining on couches, each with a pillow over the region of the stomach. This was supposed to be an aid to digestion. The walls and doors were adorned with various texts, and in large letters was written: 'The word "crisis" is not allowed to be spoken of during meals.'

"Mayne Reid turned a questioning and despairing look upon some of his fellow-sufferers.

"'It's the Inquisition, where we are tortured on the rack, and our flesh mortified!' murmured a voice in his ear.

"On retiring to our room, we were told that we could not have our little dog in the 'establishment.' She must be 'boarded out.' I tried to be brave over this matter, and allowed myself to part with little Tottie, the most diminutive specimen of her kind, and who had never been parted from me since she was a fortnight old. But, seeing my distress, my husband regained somewhat of his old courage, and flinging on his overcoat, said to me:

"'Come along, dear, we will fetch Tottie back; I won't submit to be bullied in this manner!' So we trudged through the snow, and carried back the little creature in triumph. The woman who was taking charge of the dog told us that she refused to eat or drink anything at all, and the joy expressed by Tottie at seeing my face again was quite human-like.

"The following day we resolved upon leaving Smedley's, having been told of a much more cheerful and civilised 'Hydro'—Matlock House—higher up on the hill. We spent nine weeks at this latter place,

receiving every kindness from its proprietors. But Mayne Reid was deriving no benefit. His delusions still continued. He fancied that he could not even sign his name, and all his correspondence devolved upon myself.

"Our funds were getting exhausted, and my husband's health no better, so at last I prevailed upon him to let us depart from Derbyshire, and go up to London to see Dr. Russell Reynolds, whom I had been advised to consult about my husband. Mayne said to me that he dared 'not take the journey,' but I laughed away his fears, although I had to hold on to his coat-tails during the railway journey to London, for he would insist upon opening the carriage door and sitting on the step, as he declared he must jump out. Tottie meanwhile was barking her disapproval of her master's behaviour."

Dr. Reynolds advised Mayne Reid to try and work his brain a little every day, and not to give way to fancies; also he recommended plenty of good nourishment to feed the brain, with the result that very shortly that brain, which had been so sadly clouded, awoke to energy, and Mayne Reid resumed the pen with somewhat of his old fire. He may be said to have arisen, like the phœnix, "out of its own ashes," and Fortune once more smiled on him, and the Fates were kind; and though still often suffering much from depression, he gradually regained health.

"My long illness, while it rendered me helpless as a child, has left me unscathed mentally, and with my

now rapidly-growing physical strength, I take up my pen with a zest which I never expected again would control me," was what Mayne Reid wrote to Charles Ollivant, who was then still in America.

After writing some short articles for Cassell's *Illustrated Travels*, the author revised the "Finger of Fate" and the "Lone Ranch," both of which were published in two volumes by Chapman & Hall, London. The latter novel was first written by Mayne Reid in New York, as before-mentioned.

In May, 1872, Mayne Reid commenced a new romance, which he called the "Death Shot." This finally appeared in the *Penny Illustrated Paper*, speedily increasing the circulation of that journal. Later it was published in three volumes by Chapman & Hall, London, also by Beadle & Adams, New York, in the *Saturday Journal*. *Fun* thus favourably noticed the appearance of the work, and the continued ability of the author:—

"A novel from the wonder-working pen of Captain Mayne Reid has been a rare treat of late years. We are therefore delighted to welcome, in orthodox three-volume form, the stirring story of the 'Death Shot,' which lacks none of the old energy and picturesque attractiveness that have made his name a household word."

The "Lone Ranch" was next entirely rewritten making it a much longer story. This was published

in the *Penny Illustrated Paper* under the title of "Adela."

In January, 1873, Mayne Reid went to Boston, Lincolnshire, to make a political speech in support of the candidature of his friend, Mr. Ingram, proprietor of the *Illustrated London News*. A great Liberal meeting was held in the Corn Exchange, where the author made a stirring address, creating great enthusiasm. At the close a man of influence rushed forward, and grasping the speaker by the hand, exclaimed: "Captain Reid, you are not a man, you are a god!" It may be added that Mr. Ingram was elected.

Contrary to the general rule among literary men, Mayne Reid possessed rare powers of oratory; the few occasions on which he occupied the platform gave proof of this. He could speak for hours at a time with untiring energy, his favourite subject being politics. The language from his tongue flowed facile as that from his pen. He would often astonish his listeners by his eloquence in support of his unwavering faith in the superiority of Republican over Monarchical institutions. Sometimes he came across a Tory, equally ardent, and then the "fur would fly." But Mayne Reid, by his great charm of manner, rarely gave offence on such occasions, but was, as a rule, listened to with good nature by both sides. Often, while in the height of a very warm discussion, he would suddenly change the theme, dropping at

once from the sublime to the ridiculous with such ease that it was difficult for his audience to tell whether he had really been in earnest. Had Mayne Reid chosen, he might have become as famous for oratory as he was for writing entertaining and instructive books.

In 1873, Mayne Reid was preparing a new romance, entitled the "Flag of Distress," to be published in *Chambers's Journal.*

A proposition was made to Mayne Reid in the year 1873 by parties who desired him to write a new book, to go to Mexico and explore the Gulf of California. The projectors of this scheme made him a handsome offer, but he replied: "It is not enough to tempt me in the face of present prospects here."

Many who now learn of this proposed exploration will sincerely regret that the offer was not accepted, for a book relating to this remote and almost unknown territory, its inhabitants, and its fauna and flora, by the observing and truthful pen of Mayne Reid, would have been a treat indeed.

About this time the author wrote to a friend: "I am now in the middle of a negotiation that, if successful, will be of great service to me—perhaps give me a small income for life, and for my dear wife when I die. I am trying to repurchase the copyrights of my novels." In this he was successful, being enabled in December, 1873, and the following June, to repurchase the copyrights of most of his works.

Mayne Reid had for some time contemplated the dramatisation of all his works then written. Hearing of this intention, P. T. Barnum, the great showman, called upon him and negotiated for the right to produce the plays. Soon after, the following announcement appeared in London newspapers:—

"Captain Mayne Reid is about to enter upon a new field of literature—the drama. Mr. Barnum, the American entrepreneur, has engaged him to write a series of plays founded on his own novels, to be produced simultaneously on the British and American stages. Two of them already written have been pronounced by critics to be equal in dramatic power to any on the modern stage, while superior in picturesque effect.

"Let there be no more wailing amongst managers, no more weeping amongst the star actors, and no more gnashing of teeth amongst the critics over the difficulty of obtaining good new plays nowadays. Let there never again be an echo of the stupid cry over the degeneracy of the contemporary drama. A prophet has arisen in our midst, and the long-looked-for miracle is at last to be wrought. Mr. P. T. Barnum has stepped forth to the rescue, and all will now be well. The regeneration of the drama *à la* Boucicault is now to be accomplished. It is impossible to doubt it, for here are the words of the marvel-worker himself:

"'I have succeeded in engaging Captain Mayne Reid to write a series of plays, founded on his own novels, to be produced simultaneously in England

and the United States. Captain Reid's picturesque romances are equally popular on both sides of the Atlantic; millions have read them, and few without feeling intense interest in the scenes and characters he has created. Having secured the exclusive right for the representation of these plays, I offer them to English managers and actors for the British stage, retaining to myself their production on that of America.'"

The "Wild Huntress" and the "Maroon" were ready for the stage, having been prepared some time before. But this contract with T. P. Barnum was never carried out.

In the latter part of 1874, Chapman & Hall published a revision of the "Death Shot," in three volumes. In the preface, dated Great Malvern, September, 1874, the author said he had "remodelled —almost rewritten it. It is the same story, but, as he hopes and believes, better told."

The autumn of 1874 had been spent by Mayne Reid and his wife at Malvern, and in South Wales. Just after their return to Wimpole Street, London, on October 3, the author was again confined to his bed. This time an abscess attacked the knee of the wounded leg. Blood-poisoning rapidly followed, and the doctors in attendance gave up all hope of the patient's recovery. Once more arrangements were made for the burial of Mayne Reid, and the place of interment selected. Again reports of his death were

circulated, but, greatly to the astonishment of all, he suddenly rallied from the death stupor. So marvellous was this rally that the doctors said he had experienced quite a "resurrection!"

But his recovery was slow; for nearly six months he lay on his bed, and when he finally arose was a *cripple for life*, never thereafter being able to walk without the aid of crutches. Few ever survive such a trial as Mayne Reid underwent at this time. Two trained nurses, in addition to the constant presence of his wife—whom, as when in New York, he dreaded to have out of his sight—were in attendance night and day.

During his convalescence, Mayne Reid wrote to a friend, "The terrible New York suffering was naught to what I have gone, and am going, through now." By December he was able to be propped up in bed, and to do a little writing. He had several serious relapses after this, however, and his life seemed to hang in a balance.

During the latter part of his long confinement, the author wrote an article on "Nursing Sisters," with whom he had become so practically acquainted. This was published in *Chambers's Journal*. For *London Society* he wrote a short story, entitled "The Pierced Heart"; "Yachting on Ice," for the *Sporting and Dramatic News*, and several other short sketches. Besides this work, he corrected his new romance, "The Flag of Distress," before mentioned,

for *Chambers's Journal*, in which publication it was commenced August, 1875. All this evinced the wonderful vitality and energy possessed by the author.

The delay in the publication of "The Flag of Distress" was not entirely owing to the author's illness. When the manuscript, consisting of 1,200 pages of foolscap, was first sent to *Chambers's Journal*, the printers were unable to read it! It was then copied by Charles Ollivant, who completed the task in six weeks, working at it during his spare time from regular duties. On publication of the work in volume form, Mayne Reid dedicated the book to Charles Ollivant "as a souvenir of friendship and esteem."

Among other interesting pen-pictures in this romance are vivid sketches of Californian life in the exciting days of the gold fever. The sum of three hundred guineas was paid the author for the right of serial publication in *Chambers's Journal*. Of this book Dr. Chambers wrote: "I consider 'Harry Blew' the finest character you have drawn."

In March, 1875, Mayne Reid was sufficiently strong to bear removal to another locality in London —Maida Hill. Soon afterwards, he enjoyed daily rambles in a bath-chair. He objected to being wheeled in Kensington Gardens, always preferring Regent and Bond Streets, where he could do some shopping occasionally, and buy himself a new "rig-

out," as he called it. From this it will be seen that Mayne Reid was again recovering both health and spirits.

The author had now on hand several good offers for his pen, but he was not yet in a condition to undertake any new and extensive work. While gaining strength, however, he rewrote "The Finger of Fate," adding materially to its size and interest. This book, one of the latest of Captain Mayne Reid's posthumous works, is now issued in a handsome one volume illustrated edition, published by James Bowden, London.

CHAPTER XXII

Returns to Rural Life—Settles near the Town of Ross, Herefordshire—Writes another Novel of English Life—Correspondence Concerning a Priest—Defends the Game Laws—Leaves "Chasewood" for "Frogmore"—His Description of "Frogmore"—Too Delighted to Write.

HAVING recovered his health, Mayne Reid once more longed for green fields and country life; and early in September, 1875, he and his wife were settled in Herefordshire, four miles from the town of Ross, amid the picturesque scenery of the Wye River. For a short period they rented a furnished cottage, known as "Chasewood," standing on the main road facing the Welsh mountains in the distance.

In this new location Mayne Reid seemed to regain much of his old vigour. He spent a great deal of his time in driving about in an open phaeton, frequently making long excursions of twenty and thirty miles. In this way he became acquainted with all the places of note in the surrounding country. This inspired him to write a second novel of English life, and he finally produced the romantic tale of "Gwen

Wynn," the scene of which is laid in the valley of the Wye River.

"Gwen Wynn" was a popular romance. "It furnishes proof," says the *Scottish Leader*, "that the author could, if he had chosen, have covered a wider field in fiction than that with which his name is personally associated in the public mind." It was first published in the columns of the *Hereford Times*, and nine other provincial newspapers simultaneously, in 1878. The author realised a large sum by this work.

The villain in the story is supposed to be a French priest. At the time it was appearing in the *Hereford Times* there happened to be a French priest residing near the scene of the tale. He very absurdly supposed the character to have been drawn from himself, and wrote to the papers on the subject. Mayne Reid was, in fact, unaware of this priest's existence, and in a letter to the press so stated. A long correspondence ensued, but the priest was finally worsted.

In January, 1876, Mayne Reid entered into a long-continued controversy regarding the game laws of England. Many of the rural residents—perhaps a majority of them at that period—desired to see the laws abolished. Mayne Reid, however, defended the laws on this subject, asserting that to abolish them would not only be a backward leap in legislation, but an injustice to the majority of the nation, and to the whole a loss. In support of his claims, he thus refers in one of his articles to the United States :—

"In the United States of America, after the lapse of a hundred years, taught by a century's experience, they are taking steps to remedy an evil and supply a want which we are threatening to create! In other words, while we are in the act of abolishing game laws, they are in the act of establishing them! In the teeth of such facts, who will say that game laws are enacted to favour any class in the social scale? For surely it cannot be so in the United States—that land where there is only 'legislation of the people for the people.'"

There were several parties to the controversy—which took place in the columns of the *Hereford Times*—one of whom challenged the truth of the above statement. Mayne Reid quickly turned his batteries upon the doubter, and silenced him with an avalanche of proof.

Few men ever received the best of an argument with Mayne Reid. His position was so well chosen, and his remarks so plainly in accord with truth and justice, that he almost invariably succeeded in convincing or silencing his opponent.

Abundant proof has been given in these pages that the author was a great lover of America and Americans. He admired their form of government and their free institutions. The expression of his opinions in England sometimes made him enemies, but he was everywhere recognised as a brave and honest man, and his enemies generally ended by be-

coming fast friends, acknowledging the truth of his statements, if not quite agreeing with the sentiments.

Many short articles on various topics were written during the year, among others being a popular account of the Mexican axolotl and its habitat. This was published in *Land and Water*, February, 1876. It had been written in response to a request for information on the subject from Mr. Henry Lee. This curious animal was at that time a recent addition to the Brighton Aquarium.

Mayne Reid now left the Chasewood Cottage, and in January, 1877, had taken the lease of a country house, with land and farm buildings attached, known as "Frogmore," four miles from Ross.

Writing to Charles Ollivant, Mayne Reid describes this place:—

"I wanted a house with some land, and I could not resist the temptation of a beautiful thing about two miles from here, on the other side of the wood. It is more secluded and retired than even 'Chasewood'—in fact, a very picture of a rural nook; but a beautiful house, with some fifteen acres of land, a magnificent kitchen garden, ornamental grounds and shrubberies, with a perennial brook running through them, carriage entrance, and separate entrance to the farmyard and stabling.

"On the brook there is a wheel worked by the action of the current itself, which pumps water up to the house and all over the garden. And below in the grounds there is a sluice built across the

brook, by which I can, simply by putting a door upon it, dam up the water to form a pretty fish-pond, with trees overhanging. It was constructed for this very purpose, but the water is now let off, the sluice-gate gone. It will be restored as soon as I take possession.

"Water-hens, or 'moor-hens,' as they are called—meaning *mere* hens—come up on the lawn. The green woodpecker and blue jay are heard all around the shrubberies, while Penyard Wood, a continuance of Chasewood, the two covering a grand hill or ridge full three miles long, is just behind the house, a hundred yards back. Then there is a little farmyard quite separate and distinct from the stable and coach-yard—coach-house to hold half a dozen carriages, stabling of the best kind for eight horses, flagged courts, kitchens, larder, dairy, servants' rooms, and a big bell hung on top of the house to ring them all up betimes!

"All this for £60 per annum. The land is eight acres, but I am to have five or six more next year if I wish it at forty-eight shillings per acre. It is, indeed, a little paradise of a place, and a great bargain at £60. The reason for its being so low rented is that it has lain for two years without a tenant, so they were glad to get me. Tenants that have had it found it too lonely. And so they might if they had no acquaintances of the gentry class in the neighbourhood. But as we know all, or nearly all of that ilk, I don't think we shall be less visited there than in 'Chasewood,' though it be a mile or two farther from their residences.

"My chief object is, that in a house with a little

grass land attached and good gardens—such as it has —I may live *rent free;* whereas, in a paltry affair of the usual Cockney villa kind, your house eats his head off twice a year! This is true. The apples at 'Frogmore House'—for that is the hideous name of it, soon, however, to be called 'The Ranche'—will go far towards liquidating the rent."

The removal to this charming retreat—"the prettiest residence in all Herefordshire," Mayne Reid called it—took place in January, 1877. In the following May the delighted author again wrote his friend:—

"I am doing nothing at present, and can't work, so charmed I am with this truly rural life, which occupies me all the day long in gardening and observing facts in home natural history.

"The place is more like a grand zoological garden than a bit of ordinary English *terraine.* I have badgers, foxes, squirrels—even polecats, I hear—in the adjoining woods. In my own grounds, waterhens (miscalled moor-hens), wild pigeons, jays, magpies, starlings, rooks, jackdaws, the carrion crow, the nightingale, thrush, blackbird, missel thrush, and a host of the smaller birds.

"I killed a blue worm yesterday—which is not a blind worm, but a real sighted snake—or my gardener killed it for me—seventeen inches long, which is two inches above the greatest size of this reptile given in 'Chambers's Encyclopædia.'

"This would have been the place to have laid the scene of 'The White Gauntlet,' and I'm not sure I

may not yet be tempted into that tract for a more ambitious effort of painting the scoundrelly cavaliers in their true light—shabby dogs, as they really were."[1]

During this year (1877) the author accomplished less literary work than usual. He wrote numerous short sketches and communications, however, besides remodelling the "Lost Sister," which story had first appeared as a serial in *Onward Magazine*, New York. The work was considerably enlarged, and the title changed to "Gaspar the Gaucho." It was issued in book form by Routledge & Sons.

The production of his repurchased works gave him a great deal of trouble, and he resolved not to continue this mode of bringing them out. So he entered into an agreement with Messrs. Routledge to publish the works for him.

[1] The proposed novel was written and published about three years later, under the title of "No Quarter." See Chapter XXIV.

CHAPTER XXIII

Best Colours for Summer and Winter Clothing—First to Publicly Challenge the Old Theory—Suffers from Rheumatism—Extracts from his Diary—Produces Mexican Potatoes—"A Breeder of Sheep"—"Novelists and Librarians."

MAYNE REID had an interesting and widely-quoted article in the *London Live Stock Journal*, January 24, 1879, relating to the best colours for summer and winter clothing.[1] He strongly contended that black was the cooler colour for summer, and white the warmer for winter, contrary to the long-established belief on the subject. He pronounced the common opinion as "one of those lurking errors that from the earliest times have escaped the detection of science." Other articles on the subject followed at different periods, each of which called forth numerous opinions.

Mayne Reid was the first to publicly challenge and pronounce erroneous this old theory. This he had done ten years before the above date in the columns of his *Onward Magazine*. Some agreed, and others differed, with the writer on this subject.

[1] See Appendix.

The soundness of his reasoning has since been proved by its general acceptance among scientists.

Rheumatism and sciatica continued to trouble the author, and confined him to his bed for days together; besides, the open wound in his leg caused him no little suffering. No doubt the disagreeable weather, for which the locality was noted, aggravated his afflictions. The following extracts from his diary for the year 1879 leave little room for doubt on this point:—

"*June* 16.—Rain, rain, rain every day, and most days all day long! No chance to clear the ground for the green crops.

"*July* 1.—Cold and dark, with the same strong wind. Rained all last night.

"*July* 4.—Cold and dark skies with high wind, rain still continuing without a day's intermission. This day the thermometer all day at about fifty-five degrees!

"*August* 17.—After eight days of fine weather, again cold rain. Hay not all gathered yet."

While residing at "Frogmore," Mayne Reid paid no little attention to farming. Among other crops, he produced quantities of potatoes from Mexican seed. These were so remarkably fine and free from the disease then prevalent among the common sorts that the demand for them, for seed, greatly exceeded the supply. Speaking of the great demand for his potatoes, in a letter to a friend, the author says:—

"Ten hundredweight are already gone off, and if I had ten tons I believe I could find the way to dispose of them at the same price. I actually have a letter from the Consul-General of the German Empire ordering two hundredweight to be sent to the Ducal Government of Meiningen!"

Several instructive articles on the early history and culture of the potato were contributed to the *Live Stock Journal*, during the year 1880, by this amateur farmer.

Mayne Reid took great interest and no little pride in breeding a peculiar kind of sheep on his "Frogmore" farm. How he came into possession of the first pair, and his after experience with them, briefly told, is as follows:—

One day in the early summer of 1878, while he was returning home from London by rail, he saw from the carriage window an odd-looking animal, which he afterwards described as "a coal-black sheep, with face of snowy whiteness, and tail the same, this long and bushy as the brush of a fox." The animal appeared to be the only one thus oddly marked in a flock of about twenty.

The train soon swept past, but the author had seen enough to awaken his curiosity and stimulate a desire to own the animal. He at once resolved to return to the locality—which he had quickly noted—on the following day, and hunt up the flock and its owner. At an early hour the next morning he drove

back along the line of railway, and located the field and its flock about ten miles from his home. On closer inspection, he discovered two of the oddly marked animals, both similarly marked, except that the body of one was grey instead of black; also that they were about a year old, and a perfect pair.

The owner was found living near by, from whom it was learned that the flock was recently from the Welsh mountains, where they were known as "mountain sheep." To avoid the appearance of being particularly desirous of owning the odd pair, the owner was asked his price for the entire flock. This being reasonable, a trade was soon made, and the animals were transferred to the pastures of Frogmore on the same day.

By careful breeding, several black lambs, with white faces and tails—images of the sire—were secured the first year. After that, among others similarly marked, were several spotted like hounds, and still others flecked and speckled in a variety of patterns. In a full descriptive article to the *Live Stock Journal*, Mayne Reid said of these animals—"Jacob's sheep," as he called them:—

"Of small size and perfect symmetry in shape, these strangely marked animals attract much attention in the neighbourhood, where the like have never before been seen. People passing the fields in which they are depastured stop and stand gazing over the gates

as though it were a herd of gazelles or a drove of zebras.

"How their curious colouring originated I have no idea, for there is not the slightest taint of albinoism about it—nothing of its weak, sickly hue, either in the eyes or elsewhere. Instead, they are remarkably strong and healthy. . . ."

Several of these curious sheep were exhibited by the author at the Shropshire Agricultural Show, after having been refused admission to the Royal Agricultural Show, at Bath, in 1879, as not belonging to any of the recognised breeds. Two were accepted at the Zoological Gardens, London, where they were placed on exhibition.

About a year after "Jacob's sheep" first made their appearance in Mayne Reid's pastures, he had some of their wool woven into cloth, from which were obtained garments made to his own design. He afterwards had many yards woven, which he used for his own clothing and that of more than one of his friends.

Being free from dyeing matter, the original colour could not fade. Charles Ollivant is a witness to this superior quality, informing us that he has "had an overcoat made of this undyed cloth in constant use every winter since 1879—a period of seventeen years—and it is as good in this year of our Lord, 1897, as it was then!"

Mayne Reid sometimes jokingly remarked that he "should go down to posterity as a breeder of sheep!"

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In September, 1879, one J. T. Kay, librarian

of a college at Manchester, made a most unjust, as it was ungentlemanly, attack on the works of novelists, Mayne Reid's among the number. On seeing this in print, the author immediately wrote the following vigorous reply, which appeared in the *Daily News*, September 29, under the heading, "Novelists and Librarians":—

"To the Editor of the *Daily News*.

"SIR,—From an editorial in your paper of yesterday's issue, I learn that Mr. Kay, described as the 'Librarian of Owens College, Manchester,' at the conference of the Library Association, has asked in challenging tone: 'Whoever heard of devourers of Aimard, Mayne Reid, Cooper, and Marryat being led to more substantial literature?' Mr. Kay is represented as adding that 'novels illustrated none of the nobler principles of human nature; they contained no true chivalry, and were nuisances to mankind at large.'

"For M. Aimard's novels I have nothing to say; they are the works of a Frenchman, and let Frenchmen defend them. But if there be writings in the English language which illustrate the 'nobler principles of human nature,' and inculcate 'true chivalry' to a greater degree, or in a more effective manner, than the romances of Captain Marryat, I have yet to read them. And almost as much may be said for those of Fenimore Cooper.

"It is not pleasant for an author publicly to speak in praise of his own works, however gratified he may be to hear them praised by others. But as Mr. Kay has thrown this gauntlet direct into my teeth, I am

constrained to take it up, the other authors, with whom he has done me the honour to associate my name, being long since deceased, and unable to do so. And I answer him by saying that, if there be any merit in my writings, it is just that which he would deny them—leading their devourers to 'more substantial literature.'

"Many letters have I received (with many instances otherwise made known to me) from men now distinguished in various walks of life—especially in the natural sciences—telling me that the first inspiring cause which led them to study, and carried them to distinction, came from the lessons I had taught them in my novels. I know this without such testimony; for I had set the lessons for just such purpose. And if Mr. Kay could read the letters I have received from parents, thanking me for having instilled 'noble principles' into their children, he would possibly be merciful enough to omit my name from his *index expurgatorius*, and speak of my books as something else than 'nuisances to mankind at large.'

"Dr. Livingstone in his last letter, written in the very heart of Africa, says:—'The readers of Mayne Reid's books are the stuff to make travellers of.'[1] I never had the honour of personally knowing this greatest of travellers, and I might even say, greatest of modern men. So much the more do I esteem the compliment he has paid me; and with it in sweet

[1] Another version, copied from *Penny Illustrated Paper*, April 18, 1874, reads:—"Captain Mayne Reid had a gratifying compliment paid him in one of the last letters written by Dr. Livingstone. The illustrious African explorer wrote:—'The boys who, on reading Mayne Reid's books, would like to be "castaways," have the ring of the true missionary metal.'"

consciousness I can calmly bear the flippant and somewhat vulgar criticism of 'J. T. Kay, Librarian of Owens College, Manchester.'"

This shallow critic had good cause to rue his gross error, for the newspapers took up the matter and condemned such sweeping assertions. Nearly all testified in warm terms to the value of Mayne Reid's works, among those of certain other novelists living and dead.

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At the date of our going to press with this volume, the air was filled with echoes of the shouts from the thankful hearts of a nation. After seven anxious months the tension was relaxed—the hero of the day being Colonel Baden-Powell, the brave defender of Mafeking—and it may not be here out of place to introduce the following paragraph copied from the *Birmingham Daily Post* of May 3, 1900:

"It is intended by a Scotch member to ask the Under Secretary for War to-morrow if he can state whether Colonel Baden-Powell's book on scouting has been supplied to the German army by the German Government, and if any steps are being taken to distribute copies among the British soldiers in Africa. I may mention in this connection that the gallant defender of Mafeking drew his first hints as to the best way of scouting against an enemy from the Red Indian romances of Fenimore Cooper and Captain Mayne Reid. He once mentioned to a friend that nothing more keenly interested him as a boy than the references which he found to this subject in 'The Deerslayer' of the one author, and 'The Scalp Hunters' of the other."

CHAPTER XXIV

Studies the Habits of Animals—Fondness for Pets—"The Naturalist on the Wye"—Reputation as a Naturalist—Efforts of Charles Ollivant—His Last Romance—Hard Literary Work—Anxiety for his Wife—Contributes to American Publications—A Novel Sleigh—Adventures in a Snowbank—United States grants a Pension.

AT "Frogmore" Mayne Reid was enabled to indulge his leading passion by taking up the earnest study of the habits of all the birds, beasts, and reptiles that abounded in the neighbourhood. The variety of these denizens was so great that he called it a "Naturalist's Paradise."

He was obliged to confine his rambles to the farm, for it must be remembered that since his last serious illness in the winter and spring of 1874-75, Mayne Reid had hobbled about on crutches. But the neighbours for miles around brought him numerous specimens of birds and beasts, in addition to those he procured from his own extensive fields.

He had a great fondness for pets. A live owl and a magpie occupied cages in his room, while a baby-otter, caught on the banks of the brook which ran through the grounds, was being fed by hand.

The Captain would have milk and fish left at his bedside every night with which to feed this little pet. On the lawn, in view from his window, could be seen a hawk which he had brought up from the nest. It was a pretty little creature, and so tame that it would come at the author's whistle and dart down for food in his hand. In contrast to this, close by in a cage, was a fierce badger, that snarled and snapped whenever he was disturbed, and at last made its escape. White bull terriers, cats and kittens, goats and kids were also to be seen on the lawn.

Mayne Reid was not satisfied unless he gathered all there was to learn about the various animals which came under his observation. He patiently studied their habits in life, and after death dissected them for further investigation. Some mornings when Mrs. Reid came down to breakfast she would find her husband engaged in cutting up a mole or a snake, or some other animal which the labouring men had killed and brought in—"dainty breakfast dishes."

While he was thus occupied in his favourite study, the author was contributing a series of articles to the *Live Stock Journal*, under the general heading, "The Naturalist on the Wye." After his death these articles were published in book form, under the title, "The Naturalist in Siluria," as designed by the writer.

Speaking of Mayne Reid as "an able and assiduous naturalist," the above journal said :

"He was a keen observer, and quickly noted the situation. He was an apt descriptive writer, and all who have read his works will remember with pleasure the numerous digressions to permit the author to explain this bit of pampas, or to discover the age of that tree and the reason of its peculiar formation. As a botanist, Captain Reid was a delightful companion, and the ability with which he compared things that differed was astonishing. 'The Naturalist on the Wye' was a prolific writer, and one never wearied of reading his notes. He reasoned closely and vigorously, and if his combativeness was apparent in almost every line, it was none the less attractive."[1]

It is also interesting at this point to note the opinion of W. H. Bates, Assistant Secretary to the Royal Geographical Society, and author of "The Naturalist on the Amazon." In a letter to Mrs. Reid this gentleman says:—

"Throughout our mutual acquaintance Captain Mayne Reid always impressed me as a man deeply interested in all natural history lore, and the subject was one of our most constant topics of conversation. If circumstances in early life had turned his attention in that direction he would have made a reputation as a naturalist."

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In the spring of 1880 Charles Ollivant wrote to Mayne Reid that he thought of trying to get him a pension from the Civil List. The author objected to this, but

[1] Extract from a long obituary notice of Mayne Reid.

was confident something would be done for his wife in case of his death. Mr. Ollivant, however, determined to carry out his project. With the aid of prominent members of Parliament he secured many signatures to a memorial to the Queen. So highly was Mayne Reid respected and esteemed, notwithstanding his well-known republican principles, that the paper was signed by many prominent men of all shades of opinion, irrespective of party, including several members of the peerage.

"A more influentially signed memorial," says Mr. Ollivant, "was certainly never sent to any Premier for presentation to the Queen." But Mr. Gladstone refused to send it up to Her Majesty, and there the matter rested. Had the memorial been presented it would undoubtedly have been granted. But as a prominent member of Parliament wrote Mr. Ollivant, "Mr. Gladstone did not share their admiration of Captain Mayne Reid's writings." The author was ignorant of Mr. Ollivant's efforts in his behalf until after their failure.

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Towards the close of 1880 Mayne Reid rewrote the "Free Lances," originally written in 1869. This was published the following year—1881—in three volumes. In reviewing this romance, the London *Saturday Review* said :—

"Captain Mayne Reid seems to be as lively a

writer as he ever was, and if the 'Free Lances' causes any less thrill of excitement than was wont to be aroused by the 'Scalp Hunters,' the fault must be due to a change in the reader rather than in the author."

We now come to the last novel from Mayne Reid's prolific pen—a posthumous work when issued in book form. The title was, "No Quarter: A Romance of the Parliamentary Wars." This was first published as a serial in the Newcastle *Weekly Chronicle*. Most of the incidents took place in Herefordshire and the Forest of Dean, long familiar with the author. The *Academy* referred to it as "a rattling historical novel."

Mayne Reid also wrote a series of articles on "Our Home Natural History" for the *Sporting and Dramatic News*. For the *Boys' Illustrated News*, of which he was assistant editor on its first appearance (January, 1882), the author wrote the "Lost Mountain," and the "Chase of Leviathan"; also short stories and notes on natural history. Mayne Reid's name and writings largely increased the circulation of this journal, but he was finally compelled to give up the position, partly owing to ill-health.

About this time the author wrote to a friend: "I am in great fear my poor wife will give way. She is in very delicate health, and looking quite ill. That acts sadly against me in my work, for when she is not

cheerful I do not write nearly so well." His wife, by the way, was his amanuensis.

Mayne Reid's writings were not confined to either side of the Atlantic. While he was publishing his boys' books, novels, and short sketches in England, he was also writing something for American and other publications. In 1882 he had no less than twenty-six long and interesting articles in the New York *Tribune*, under the general heading, "The Rural Life of England." They continued for six months, from April to September. He also had an article on "The English Hay Crop," in the *Tribune* of August 7, the same year; and on December 7, a beautiful tribute to Benjamin Moran. For the *Youths' Companion*, Boston, he wrote during the year a short serial story called "The Vee-Boers," a tale of South Africa, for which he received £300.

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The winter of 1882 at "Frogmore" was noted for a very heavy fall of snow, which rendered the roads almost impassable; in fact, for days there was no postal delivery. This snow, falling on frozen ground, lay for weeks. The drifts were enormous; this was especially the case in the narrow road of the valley adjacent to "Frogmore."

Mayne Reid's active brain at once set to work to convert his open phaeton into a sleigh, as he had years before, at Gerrard's Cross, thus transformed his wife's pony carriage. The village blacksmith and

carpenter were summoned, and runners were quickly made and the woodwork painted over. On the following morning the wheels were removed from the carriage and the new gear adjusted in their place; by two o'clock in the afternoon all was ready for the author to take his coveted sleigh ride. A pair of black horses, ornamented with bells, were harnessed to the sleigh—which, with its fur robes trailing over the snow, was a really smart-looking affair.

Mounting the seat, he took the reins, and with the assistance of his coachman and the groom steered the craft safely down the carriage drive into the road, making for the town of Ross, four miles distant. His wife, being then an invalid, was unable to accompany him, and watched his departure, not without some misgivings as to the result.

The circumstances attending this adventure—for such it proved—were totally unlike those of a former ride. Then the Captain had the smooth, wide road and open common at Gerrard's Cross for experiment, whilst he himself was active on his limbs. Now the roads were narrow, winding, and steep, and in places blocked with huge drifts of snow—the driver a cripple!

The party proceeded fairly well, though at a slow pace, for about a mile and a half, when a huge drift presented itself, which the horses were unable to pull through. The coachman and groom exerted all their strength to help, but of no avail. What was to be

done? To turn the sleigh was impossible in that narrow road; so it seemed they could neither advance nor retreat. There was no traffic on the road owing to the weather. They finally procured a spade, and managed with the help of a man who fortunately happened to come along to clear the snow sufficiently to let the sleigh pass, when they at last reached the main road, where travelling was easier. Mayne Reid was determined to accomplish the task he had undertaken, and astonish the town folks of Ross, and in both of these particulars he certainly succeeded!

The return trip progressed finely until the narrow road leading to "Frogmore" was reached. The author was in high spirits at having, as he thought, fully accomplished his purpose. But while he was chuckling to himself, singing at the top of his voice, and cracking his whip, lo! over went the sleigh, becoming firmly wedged in deep snow!

> "Nor all the great efforts of horses and men
> Could set Humpty Dumpty up again!"

It was getting late in the day, and Mrs. Reid was anxiously watching for the return of the sleigh, when, to her alarm, she saw the coachman riding up the drive mounted on one of the horses which had been harnessed to the sleigh. She rushed to the door to learn what had become of her husband. The man at first assured her of his master's safety, and then related what had taken place.

The spot where the mishap had occurred was about a mile and a half from home. They had made every effort to raise the sleigh, but without success, and had then sent to the house for the shafts and wheels of the carriage, a single harness, and some tools for converting the sleigh back into its proper shape. As Mayne Reid could not walk home, nor ride one of the horses, he had been compelled to make the best of it and sit wrapped up with his furs. Fortunately, he had been provided with a foot-warmer, as well as a flask of whisky, before leaving home, and with these he made himself comfortable.

When relief arrived, it was found that one of the runners had been wrenched off. By the time the change back to wheels was accomplished, it was quite dark. At last home was reached in safety. This was Mayne Reid's last sleigh ride! A friend said to him on the following day: "You know, Captain, this could not have happened to anyone but yourself; you can make adventures even in this prosaic land!"

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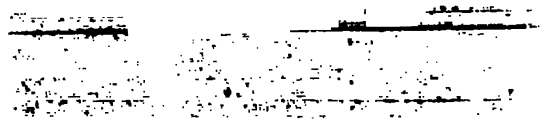
In 1882, the United States Government granted Mayne Reid a small pension for his Mexican War services. This was afterwards increased, but almost too late to be of much use to the valiant soldier. On his death, however, it was continued to his widow.

The Connaught Crusoe

Chapter I. At Sunley.

June, 1st 18—. Place Sunley, that
stood on the South of the Shannon
which we bought who has been
after Etna will ever come to remember
On the fortunate 4th of June 1st which
one Tide has reference when was
assembled around the little table
I counted an unusual number of
Natives and Settlers, each of
with an entourage of the famous
chiefs of the Jamaica tribe, circles
from, Long Ethnics. For the day
was Sunday & after an unusual encounter
at the Sunley assembled, where rain is
the rule, as Drury be after the excep-
Thanks that with Winston known in by
But it chanced so on this occasion, &
as a consequence carriages of all sorts,
most of them shay [illegible]
of in the Main hamlets were drawn
up around Sunley Lawn house, all anxious
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Reduced Facsimile of a Page of Capt. Mayne Reid's Manuscript.



CHAPTER XXV

Contemplates leaving Herefordshire—Desires to End his Labours in London—An Odd Habit—Removal to the City—Last Communication to the Newpapers—Last Story for Boys—Biographical Sketch by J. T. Trowbridge—Letter to the Editors of *St. Nicholas*—Writing his "Mexican War Memories"—Average Income from his Pen—Dines with American Friends—Accident to his Brougham—Attends an Auction Sale—Queer Purchases—Alarming Sickness—Death—Funeral Ceremonies—Description of the Gravestone—"In Memoriam," a Poem.

MAYNE REID was now seriously contemplating leaving Herefordshire. He had completed his natural history articles, and his letters on the rural life of England and other work; as he wrote several of his friends, he was "sick of Herefordshire," and longed to live in London again. Added to this, his wife's precarious health caused him no little anxiety. Accordingly, in Februrary, 1883, they resolved upon going back to London for permanent residence. Writing to a friend regarding this proposed change, the author said:—

"I have long believed that this old red sandstone

is very detrimental to health, and very productive of rheumatism of all sorts. The roads all around are covered with hobbling cripples; and like as not my sciatica is in part, if not wholly, due to the climate. Besides, I am out of the world here."

Mayne Reid felt that the shadows were gathering around him, and he wished to end his labours in the great world of London, the scene of his first literary triumphs. London to him was full of familiar and kindred spirits. Even from his Herefordshire home he had made frequent visits to the city, always putting up at his favourite resort—the Langham Hotel. *À propos* of his trips to London, a curious paragraph appeared in some of the papers to this effect :—

"Captain Mayne Reid comes to town every week, and, on his arrival at the Langham Hotel, writes to his young and charming wife the single word 'Rover.'"

The explanation of this is that when the Captain went up alone, his wife always gave him a post-card, ready addressed, on which he was to inform her of his safe arrival, and put it in the first post. He usually wrote only a word or two. Sometimes it would be, "Have arrove"; at others, "Arriven," and now for novelty the word "Rover." He had chanced to hand this particular card to a young American to post for him, who, being struck with the odd word,

mentioned the matter at the hotel. But the author would not satisfy the company's curiosity, and the matter finally went the rounds of the papers.

Early in March Mayne Reid took up his residence in London at Blomfield Road, Maida Hill, to which place he transferred many of his belongings from Herefordshire. Finding that the amount he expended on hansom cabs nearly equalled the cost of keeping his own horse, he summoned his faithful coachman to drive the animal up to London from Ross. The faithful William Davies remained in close attendance upon his master until the end.

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The last communication Mayne Reid sent to the press was headed "The Czar's Coronation," and appeared in the *Echo*, June 4, 1883. The following are brief extracts from the article:—

"Above all, in its religious aspects, has it been a thing of abomination. We read of a human being of the most ordinary type—possibly a tyro in embryo—receiving adoration such as should be given to God; not only receiving, but, by the very act of reception, intimating it to be his due! Verily, it would seem as though we were back amid the knee-bendings and superstitions of the dark, barbarous ages. Indeed, the whole pageant, instead of evincing progress in civilisation, is absolute evidence of retrogression towards barbarism—a return to the grandeurs of the Great Mogul, with the wild beast shows and gladiatorial spectacles of ancient Rome. Such displays, so far

from giving proof of a nation's strength and glory, but make manifest its weakness and shame. . . . Certainly, such a bold brazening of the divine right of kings, supposed to have been long since surrendered up, is vividly provocative—a very gauntlet thrown in the teeth of oppressed peoples, challenging, tempting, even courting retaliation."

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Mayne Reid now wrote his last story for boys. It was entitled "The Land of Fire," a tale of Tierra del Fuego, and was prepared for *St. Nicholas*, New York. It was completed and mailed to the editor September, 1883. The first chapter appeared in that magazine in its December issue, after the hand that penned it was no more. The author received $1,500 for the right of its first appearance in *St. Nicholas*. It was afterwards published in volume form by Warne & Co., London.

The November number of *St. Nicholas* had published a brief biographical sketch of Mayne Reid, which had been prepared before the former's death. In a letter to the editors accompanying his manuscript in September, Mayne Reid thus refers to this sketch and his desires:

"I have heard that you intend honouring me by a biographical sketch; and, furthermore, that I am to receive this honour at the hands of America's most celebrated, and justly celebrated, writer, Mr. Trowbridge. Will you kindly notify this gentleman that

the only thing about myself I specially care to have recorded is my great love and reverence for the American people, and above all for the American youth, whom I regard with an affection warm and strong, almost as a man would feel for his own children!"

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At odd times the author was writing his "Mexican War Memories," referred to and inserted in Chapters IV., V., and VI. He worked principally in the evening, devoting the day to driving about, visiting friends. He had contrived a novel kind of check-string in his brougham, by which he was enabled to guide his Herefordshire coachman through the labyrinth of London streets. He rarely drove in the Park, preferring the busiest parts of the great metropolis.

Mayne Reid was never an idle man; in fact, after his sword was sheathed in its scabbard, his pen never rested except for brief intervals. And his brain was as active as ever until within a fortnight of his death.

The average amount received by Mayne Reid for each of his novels and boys' books was £1,000 for the former, and from £500 to £600 for the latter. Nearly all the novels were first published in serial form in periodicals, the right to future publication being reserved by the author. To the large sums thus realised was added various sums received for short stories, sketches, and articles on a great variety of

topics, also varied amounts from American publishers. Taken altogether, the total income from his pen averaged about £2,000 per year.

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On the 4th of October, 1883, Mayne Reid dined at the Langham Hotel with a party of American friends. He was driven to the hotel in his own brougham, which was to have returned for him at eleven o'clock. But, with his usual impatience, he flung open the door of the carriage just before arriving at his destination, which caught on one of the projecting iron pivots in front of the hotel, and was violently wrenched from its hinges and landed on the pavement. Owing to this accident the carriage did not return, and the night was passed with his friends in reviving old scenes and events. He returned home about four o'clock in the morning.

The late hours and excitement attending his visit to the Langham, however, had an ill effect upon him, and he did not leave his bedroom for four days. He was able, nevertheless, to finish a short story for the Christmas number of the *Penny Illustrated Paper*, called "A Christmas in Kerguelan's Land."

On the evening of the fourth day of his indisposition, Mayne Reid, contrary to all persuasion, insisted upon going out to attend an auction sale—always an attraction for him, as before mentioned. The brougham had by this time been repaired, and he departed in it, returning home about nine o'clock with

the strangest collection of articles imaginable, among them a black chest and a framed "In Memoriam" of someone. Mrs. Reid remarked at the oddness of his purchases, and he replied that he "hoped it was not ominous."

On his return from the auction sale, Mayne Reid seemed to be considerably exhausted, but after eating some food he sat down in his accustomed place, with writing materials before him on his improvised table, and wrote a few pages of his "Mexican War Memories." He retired to bed about eleven o'clock, never to rise from it again.

The following morning alarming symptoms set in; another abscess formed in the knee of his wounded leg. Physicians were immediately summoned, and a professional nurse engaged. For the first few days Mayne Reid exhibited his wonderful energy by correcting some proofs and dictating a letter or two to his wife, but he grew rapidly worse, and was obliged to abandon every effort.

The doctors had given little hope of his recovery, but the day before his death he seemed to rally so much that the chief physician (there were three in attendance) thought he would recover. But it was only the brightening up of the flame before the lamp of life expired.

Although his sufferings had been great, Mayne Reid finally passed peacefully away, conscious nearly to the last. On Monday, October 22, 1883, at eight

o'clock in the evening, he had entered into his last sleep.

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The funeral ceremonies were quite private, only a few personal friends being present. The cortége left the house, 12 Blomfield Road, Maida Hill, London, on Thursday, October 25, for Kensal Green Cemetery, followed by a few mourners, where the remains were given their last resting-place.

The United States Consul, in London, sent a beautiful wreath for the casket, and was represented at the grave by Colonel Mitchell and Mr. Kelly, members of the Consulate, all friends of the deceased author.

In loving memory of her husband, his widow, at her own expense, and from a design of her own, to mark the last resting-place of Mayne Reid, has had erected over his grave an irregular block of white marble, with chain and anchor, and on this is carved a sword and pen crossing each other, and the following inscription :—

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF
MAYNE REID, Author.
Born April 4, 1818. Died October 22, 1883.
"Gone to his dreamless sleep."

Along the margin of the base of the headstone is a quotation from "The Scalp Hunters," as follows :—

"This is 'the weed prairie';[1] it is misnamed:
It is the Garden of God."

. . . . . .

The following lines were written impromptu by Charles Ollivant's sister, Caroline, on the day after Mayne Reid's death:—

"IN MEMORIAM.

"A warrior has gone home,
A mighty spirit fled!
Hush'd is the magic tone—
A noble man is dead.

"Oh, boys of England, mourn!
Ye well may grieve and weep,
As to the grave is borne
This hero, gone to sleep.

"No more his wondrous pen
Can thrill you with delight;
He may not come again
To wreathe fresh spells as bright.

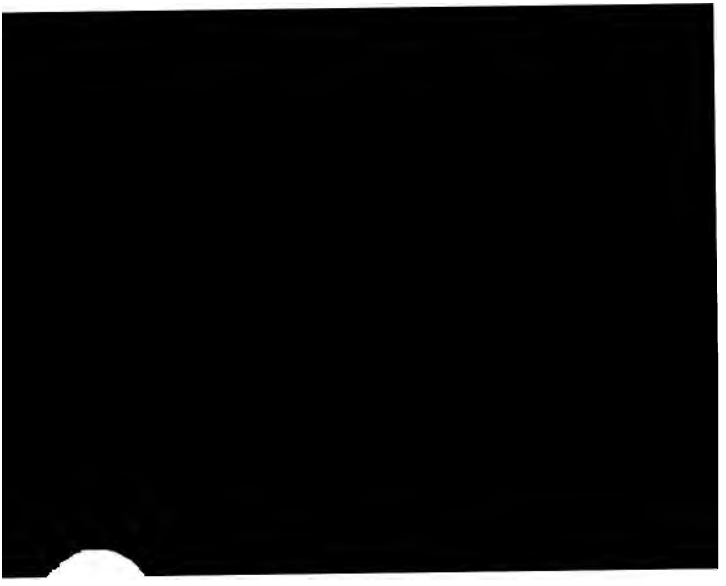
"His kindly heart is stilled;
Imagination's fire
For us is quenched and chilled,
And seemeth to expire.

"But no! Beyond the veil
Of this dim, shrouding clay
His brightest powers can never fail,
And there—he *lives* to-day!

[1] A name given by the early pioneers of America to a prairie of flowers. It is also appropriate, as in this country the graveyard is called "God's Acre."

"Then, dear Mayne Reid, farewell!
Thou'st gained a happier shore,
Where we, too, hope to dwell,
When earth's tide flows no more.

"Thou'st fallen at thy guns,
Thy keen lance is laid by;
But in the hearts of England's sons
Thy name shall never die!"



APPENDIX

OBITUARY NOTICES.

THE death of Captain Mayne Reid was sincerely mourned throughout the world. The press was unanimous in its expressions of regret, columns being devoted to the lamented author and his works. The principal journals of London contained long leading editorials on the subject. The *Times*, with which paper the author had had more than one passage of arms, graciously devoted a long leader.

The following are brief extracts from a few obituary notices of the author. Thousands might be given.

Times:—"Every schoolboy, and everyone who has ever been a schoolboy, will learn with sorrow of the death of Captain Mayne Reid. . . . "

Post:—"The death of Mayne Reid removes a genial and popular figure from the world's stage. . . . There is plenty of room for writers who can instruct and amuse youth as pleasantly and healthfully as he did."

Live Stock Journal:—"It is with deep regret that we announce that Mayne Reid has crossed that bourne from whence no traveller returns. . . . He reasoned closely and vigorously. . . . He was an enthusiast in everything he advocated, whether it was the growth of Mexican potatoes, or rearing speckled sheep, or overturning the theories and

beliefs of ages, political or religious, bucolic or otherwise. It did not matter to the Captain how people stood his attack or criticism; and, as far as we could judge, he never feared consequences. . . . We can only add to this notice our hearty sorrow and sincere regret at losing a personal friend and a valued contributor."

Spectator:—"He was a man of exceptional daring, having a positive liking for danger; he had the topographical eyes which should belong to a general."

Saturday Review:—"His books are models of what books for boys ought to be."

Truth:—"Many a man will have felt a pang of regret on hearing of the death of one whose writings gave him so many happy hours as a boy."

Sporting and Dramatic News:—"His loss must be especially felt by those with whom Captain Mayne Reid worked, for he was a singularly cheery, genial companion. Perhaps it was strange that one who had seen so much exciting life and adventure should have devoted days, as he did, to watching a little bird's nest or the habits of a field-mouse; but natural history was his passion."

Daily News:—"When his sword was sheathed and his fingers held the pen, he wrote with vigour and impetuosity, as if under fire. Captain Mayne Reid gave by his books a great deal of innocent pleasure, and they could always be admitted without scruple or inquiry into the best regulated families."

New York Herald:—"Very noticeable indeed is the deep and wide knowledge of natural history displayed throughout all his writings. . . . It is not an unsafe prediction to say that his works will continue to be as popular fifty years hence as they are to-day."

New York Sun:—One of the best story-tellers of our time passed away when Mayne Reid died at his home in England. . . . No better books for boys were ever written . . . his writings are characterised by the most wholesome spirit, and inculcate purity and rectitude no less than manliness."

New York Tribune:—"The death of Mayne Reid brings to a close a career which had been mainly devoted to the entertainment and instruction of children. . . . The influence of his books was always wholesome. . . . He was a keen observer, and a thoroughly sincere and honest man. . . . In spirit he was an American rather than an Englishman."

Inter-Ocean, Chicago:—"The youth of England and America have had few better friends than Captain Mayne Reid. Possessed of a delightful imagination, and a mind of unusual purity as well as brightness of intelligence, his heart beat kindly for the young, and he inclined his powers toward their entertainment and improvement. His death . . . should occasion more than the transitory regret felt when any man of note passes away. . . . No boy or girl ever read a story by Captain Mayne Reid without having learned something worth remembering through life."

MAYNE REID.

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

BY ELIZABETH REID, HIS WIDOW.

EXTRACTS FROM THE PRESS.

"Mrs. Reid's Memoir of her husband, Captain Mayne Reid, the novelist, will be read with interest by a great many men, for the sake of the boys which they were when they read 'The Scalp Hunters' or 'The Headless Horseman.' His life was an adventurous one, and its various incidents are told with spirit and effect. There was no more popular writer in his time of books for boys, and the story of his life, told as it is with brevity and point, forms a welcome edition to literary biography."—*Scotsman.*

"Mrs. Reid's Memoir of her husband is full of devotion and admiration. In her eyes he is the one hero; and if the book is a little unbalanced in its parts, its natural delight in every tribute of respect to the Captain and his writings is pretty. Mrs. Reid's artlessness succeeds, where art might have failed, in making the striking personality of her husband stand out in strong relief."—*Sheffield Independent.*

"'To most of the world Captain Mayne Reid is known only as a writer of thrilling romances and works on natural history.' Thus writes Mrs. Reid in her interesting sketch of her husband's life, in which his career as a man of action and a soldier is narrated in a most pleasing and unpretentious style."—*Saturday Review.*

"In 'Mayne Reid: a Memoir of his Life,' the widow of the gallant officer tells the world of the stirring adventures through which her husband passed in the Mexican War; in his great pluck and his delight in wild rides over Mexican

prairies, with a good deal of information as to his habits and the incidents of his career when peacefully engaged in novel-writing. This interesting account of a stirring career will be welcome to many who prize Captain Reid's memory as that of one who gave them their first true literary enjoyment."—*Daily Telegraph.*

"Boys, old and young, will take genuine delight in the biography of an old favourite—Captain Mayne Reid. The best kind of old man retains somewhat of the boy-spirit to the last. Mr. Gladstone loved a sensational novel now and then. Thomas Carlyle used to refresh himself with 'The Last of the Mohicans.' Even a bishop might be pardoned if he withdrew into a quiet corner with Mayne Reid's 'Scalp Hunters' and 'Rifle Rangers.' The book is written by Captain Mayne Reid's widow, and a most stirring biography it is, with its stories of Reid's Mexican fighting and hairbreadth escapes."—*The Echo.*

"The present Memoir by his widow is written with affectionate enthusiasm; and it is no slight tribute to his merits that late in life he should have evoked such obviously ardent devotion. This simple narrative cannot fail to keep alive the general interest in a remarkably single-minded and warm-hearted man."—*The Athenæum.*

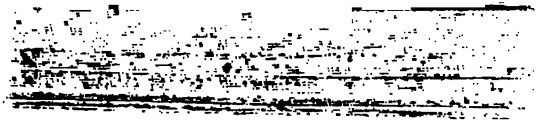
"Mayne Reid, whose name, like that of Cortes, is immortally associated with Mexico: he had the makings of a warrior. A pity it is that he did not fight for his own country: he was the man to have taken the Redan, and held it when he had taken it. The romance of his marriage is as curious as anything he ever wrote, though there are no alligators in it. He was born to be a soldier—was an author by accident. He had faults which philosophers have often called the military temperament. But every reader who has been a boy is, or should be, grateful to this hero and penman."—*Daily News.*

"'The Scalp Hunters,' which no man can remember without a thrill, not for the magnificent adventures alone, but because it is the story in which the love-passages appeal most directly to boyhood. Mr. Swinburne declares that every Englishman is in love with Jane Eyre; it is less hyperbolical to say that every English boy is in love with Zöe. He found the Zöe of his dreams in England, and married her. The narrative of his courtship will be found one of the strangest. 'The Scalp Hunters,' 'The Rifle Rangers,' and 'The Headless Horseman' may have numerous rivals, but we think in their own line they have never been surpassed. One can only lament that with his vigorous frame, command over men, ardent disposition, and power of organisation—above all, with his passionate desire for action—no other course was open to him than to settle down into a professional writer of stories."—*The Speaker.*

"One gets from this book a very pleasant impression of the man: active, nervous, strenuous in endeavour, with fine enthusiasms and high ideals—kindly, genial, impulsive. And it has the unhappily exceptional merit nowadays of being brief. Goldsmith has said that were angels to write books they would not write folios, and, according to this standard, modern biographers are rarely among the angels. But here, for once, is a biography which gives all essentials in a pleasant and readable form, and which one may read comfortably in an evening. *O si sic omnes!*"—*The Birmingham Daily Post.*

The following beautiful little poem was composed by Mayne Reid, and published in his *Onward Magazine*, February, 1869. The kindly fellow-feeling which pervades it was characteristic of the man.

Mrs. Mayne Reid.
(From an oil painting.)



"HAPPY NEW YEAR.

" Hail to the New Year's day !
  Sing it a roundelay !
Fling away care on a dawning so dear !
  Keep it a festival,
  Blithest and best of all !
Sure, 'tis the happiest day of the year !

" Let it be glorious—
  Not too uproarious—
Drink to your friends whether distant or near !
  Quaff to your sweethearts true ;
  Then to the ' boys in blue ' ;
Coupling your toast with your country so dear !

" Ye in high places,
  Surrounded with graces,
Everything needed to give you good cheer ;
  Cast aside vanity,
  Put on humanity,
Open your hearts on this day of the year.

" Open and chasten them ;
  If there be waste in them
Fill it with thoughts that are true and sincere.
  Aged and youthful,
  With hearts beating truthful,
You'll happier feel on this day of the year.

" Chasten and open them—
  Plenty of scope in them—
Lend to the tale of the hapless an ear.
  Those who toil drearily,
  Speak to them cheerily,
Bid them be joyful throughout the New Year.

" New Year ! what mystery
  Hid in thy history,
Waits for revealment, in joy or in fear ?
  We hope 'twill be gladness—
  Unshadowed by sadness—
Wishing the whole world a Happy New Year !

THE MERITS OF WHITE AND BLACK COLOURS FOR CLOTHING.

(*See Chapter XXIII.*)

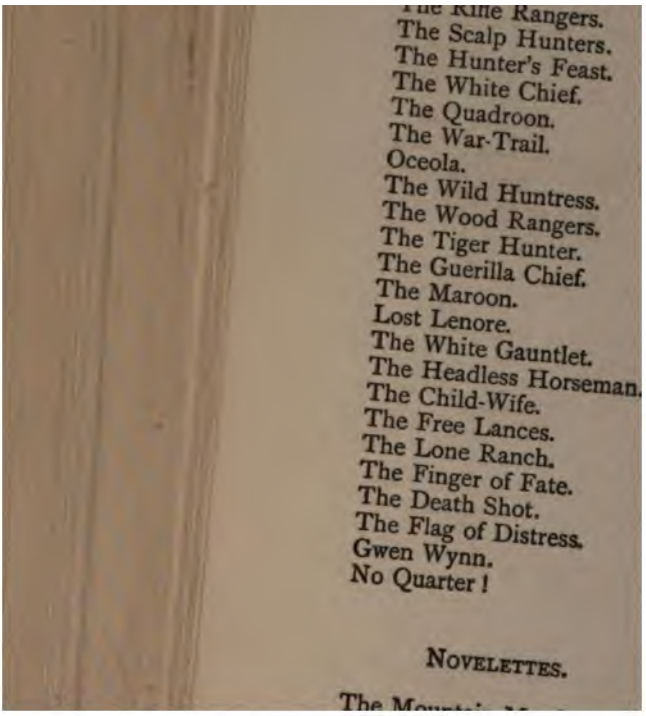
Mayne Reid discussed the above subject in the *Live Stock Journal*, London, January 24, 1879, as follows :—

"Why do polar hares and foxes that are slate-blue in summer turn snow-white in winter? Nature effects the change; but with what object and for what purpose? The usual mode of accounting for it, when speaking of the hare, is that this defenceless creature, by becoming white, is assimilated to the colour of the snow, and so escapes the danger of being sighted by predatory animals. But the fox also assumes a white dress precisely at the same period of time; and, as he is one of these predatory animals, his altered hue enables him the more easily to approach this very prey! So if that were the design of the transformation, we should have Nature making a fool of herself, which Nature never does.

"I am acquainted with the usual test of colour temperature: the two pieces of cloth, white and black, spread upon snow. When this proverbial problem comes to be more thoroughly investigated, it will go the way of the flat earth and the spherical bullet.

"While campaigning in a tropical country, under the hottest suns, I became aware that a black coat was cooler than a white one, both being of the same weight, texture, and thickness—in short, *coeteris paribus*, save the colour. The fact led me to reflection, to correlation of other facts and circumstances observed at the same time, as on other occasions. For one, I could see that my negro servant alongside me, enveloped in a coal-black skin, did not suffer from the fervid rays of the sun half as much as I under my

tripe-coloured epidermis. What could this be but a provision of Nature—merciful Nature—made for him whose home was to be in the torrid zone? And the longer I remained within its limits the more could I acknowledge her kindness in tanning my cheeks, and so making them less sensitive of the scorching of the sun. From the coat upon my back and the colour of my skin, thought wandered to the black bears of tropical countries—always coal-black—to the brown species of temperate climes, and on to the Arctic ice, where Ursa is robed in white. Then, there is night and day, shadow and sunlight, the dark naked ground, and the same covered with snow—all in their opposed temperatures in conformity with my belief as above."



The Rifle Rangers.
The Scalp Hunters.
The Hunter's Feast.
The White Chief.
The Quadroon.
The War-Trail.
Oceola.
The Wild Huntress.
The Wood Rangers.
The Tiger Hunter.
The Guerilla Chief.
The Maroon.
Lost Lenore.
The White Gauntlet.
The Headless Horseman.
The Child-Wife.
The Free Lances.
The Lone Ranch.
The Finger of Fate.
The Death Shot.
The Flag of Distress.
Gwen Wynn.
No Quarter!

NOVELETTES.

The Mountain

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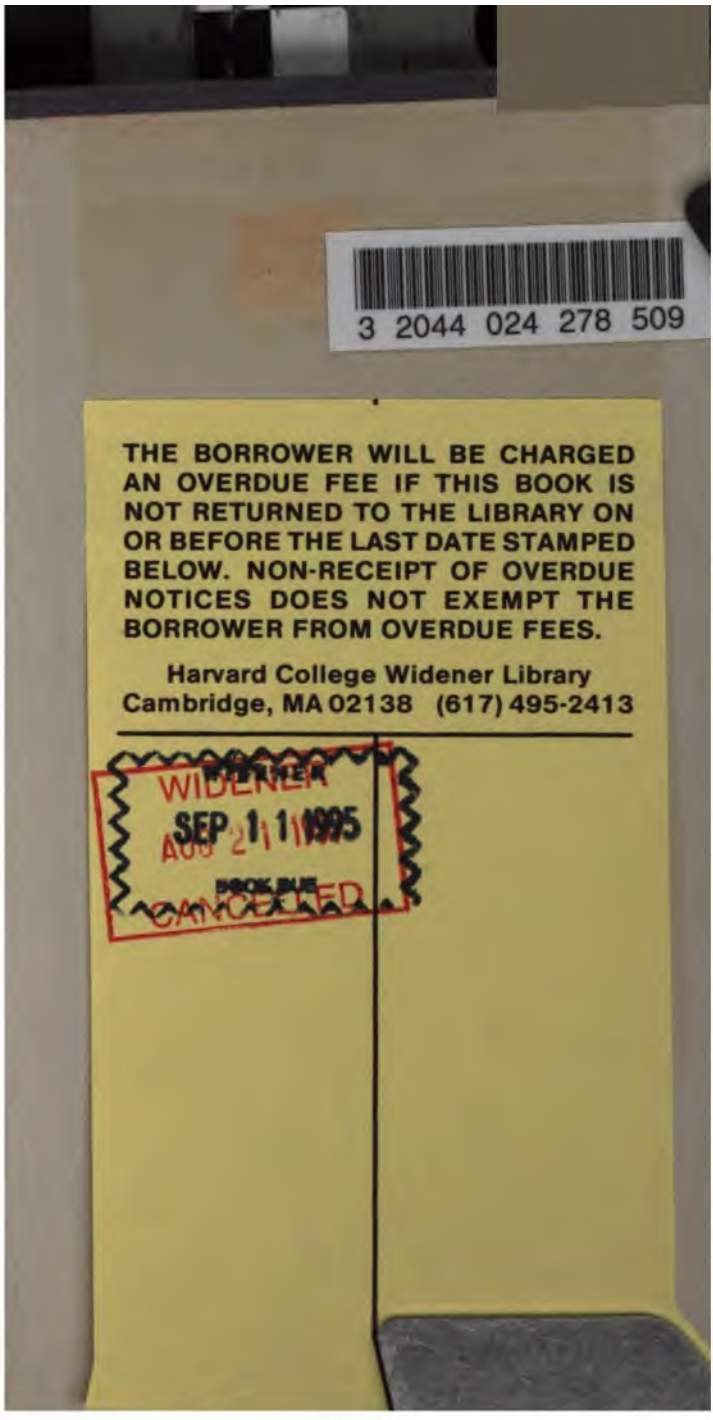
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